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SAMUEL M. KOOTZ

MODERN AMERICAN PAINTERS

BREWER & WARREN INC.

GREENS FARMS, CONNECTICUT 06436

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TO

MARGARET

FOREWORD

I have made no attempt in this book to discover nationalistic painters. The word American has nothing to do with painting; it is simply a descriptive word representing the nation in which the artist works. I am concerned solely with what painters in America are trying to accomplish.

Our more zealous chauvinists are demanding a national art. The newly awakened art public has begun to speculate upon the best painter in America, and, particularly, upon the best American painter. 100% Americanism is being brought to art as its reason for being; the patrioteers are in full scent for some one to tag with the title The Great American Painter. It is the same cry raised by the public and our esteemed literary critics when they sought The Great American Novelist—and pounced upon Theodore Dreiser. Dreiser's descriptive journalism is now being put into paint by Burchfield and Hopper, and already I have heard them hailed as our American white hopes. Are we to dismiss Weber, Blume and Sterne because of their Russian heritage? Is the Japanese Kuniyoshi eligible for honors? It would be wise to test the worth of each painter as an artist. The Spaniard Picasso, the Russian Chagall, the Greek-Italian Chirico all paint in Paris, but no French nationalism is demanded of them. If a good artist happens, quite by his own feeling and tradition, to appear distinctly American, add that to his credit side if you will, but there seems little to gain in beseeching our painters to portray American scenes. Nostalgia also can be purchased on post-cards.

I have not attempted to go into the complete history of the modern movement, which readers will find admirably outlined in the writings of Meier-Graeffe, Roger Fry, Clive Bell, Maurice Raenal, and, particularly, in the excellent The Modern Movement in Art by R. H. Wilenski. The important renaissance now assuming form in Mexico is described in Anita Brenner's understanding Idols Behind Altars.

FOREWORD

I have found it essential, however, to analyze some of the later movements in order to comment upon the American development. In addition, since I believe present surrounding social conditions have an important bearing upon painting trends, I have given some attention to these conditions.

Because France is the breeding ground for all that has been most significant in modern painting, I have used French painting as a criterion for what painters in America are doing. Naturally, I have selected those American painters who are I believe in the front rank in order to give their importance greater critical study. To illustrate their works I have selected important examples for reproduction, and, where possible, have shown their progress over a period of years.

No book on modern American painting can be written without a statement of the debt due Mr. Alfred Stieglitz for his sturdy support and continual pioneering in the interests of those painters who first found encouragement from him for their diverse talents. If a genuine, sincere art comes into being in America, it will largely be the result of this man's hearty urging that our better artists be completely themselves. Mr. Charles Daniel and Mr. Alanson Hartpence have also done courageous service in sponsoring some of our finest artists.

I am grateful to the various painters who have been so kind in giving me their co-operation, and to the following galleries for their loan of the photographs used: An American Place, The Daniel Gallery, E. Weyhe, The Downtown Gallery, the Reinhardt Gallery and J. B. Neumann.

S. M. K.
New York,
September
1 9 3 0

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1

MODERN MOVEMENTS

THE SEARCH FOR TECHNIQUE

Instead of entering into an abrupt discussion of present-day American painters, it would be wise to set down some of the history of the modern movement and interpret our own modernism in the light of what has gone before.

During the nineteenth century French artists were deeply immersed in Romanticism, whose chief concern was the purely emotional reaction of the artist. Anything might be sufficient to supply an emotive element, the criterion being the simple one of subjective sensation. The romantic artist, in a fevered attempt to capture emotion before it could cool or escape him, made no effort to intellectualize his impressions in a formal order. If his work conveyed the conviction of that emotion it was sufficient.

Since this theory of art placed the artist's reactions above the cause of these reactions, requiring no special analysis of his emotions and no formal order within which they might be expressed, the artists of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries came to regard uncontrolled Romanticism as degenerate. A revulsion from this easy method of painting resulted in a search for the established principles of a classicism whose major interest was an universal architecture, whose credo, in brief, was that perception must be presented in terms of formal relations.

This rediscovered theory came gradually through the efforts of the Impressionists, of Turner and Constable through Monet, who broke down color values in terms of light; through the realism of Courbet, Manet and Daumier; and mainly through the supreme vision of Seurat and Cézanne in attempting to realize a purer structural form within which they could build their conceptions.

This modernity of Seurat and Cézanne is not new. The greatest of our classical artists were all highly concerned with this same matter of controlled expression. Greco, Leonardo, Cranach, Michelangelo, Rembrandt and many others were deeply conscious of the construction of a picture. But what they had dis-

covered was lost in a welter of emotionalism, in search after unusual romantic impressions.

Seurat and Cézanne brought back to us the comprehension that after an artist has received his original impression and passed it through the flame of his own imagining, he must then give to that perception a formal order and structural building just as the architect does in ordering the masses and volumes of a modern skyscraper.

This formal order which our modern artists sought depended upon the conquest of the artist's comprehension of individual forms and his unification of them into a single symbol. It meant that no longer could artists consider a painting as other than a constructed, carefully plotted creation. It was no more a record of a fleeting emotion dashed post-haste upon canvas, but rather a purposely designed interpretation of the artist's reactions in their relation to a cosmic order.

Coincident with the arrival of this fresh thinking and seeing, modern artists realized the lack of value of descriptive painting, of mere representation. So long had they been slaves to a camera-like imitation that creation was forgotten in a servile attempt to secure as exact a reproduction as was humanly possible. Carried too far, Realism, it was found, could be as harmful as Romanticism.

In this reaction, Picasso and Bracque, asserting the right of the artist to paint in a purely impersonal manner, the right to eliminate all signs of the artist himself, led the way to Cubism, that abstract breaking down of form to its basic elements in a search for balance, measure, spatial values, architectonic symbols, and the relation of everything seen in terms of this geometry—in terms of the cube, cone, sphere and cylinder.

From this dry estheticism the Cubists later turned to a less obvious elimination of the representation that had been anathema to them, and discovered that they might represent and still achieve their purpose.

Cubism was sorely needed, for it was the only manner in which the painter could anesthetize his hitherto inordinate slavery to representation and discover, in comparatively abstract mathematical fashion, the profound technical secrets of his craft. After digesting the lessons of Cubism it was possible to go back to representation with an attitude that robbed it of its associations and allowed the artist to reject representation or to accept it and utilize it as a part of his architectural symbols, reduced completely from its emotive capacity of

recognition to one of individually balanced forms homogeneous with the other forms within the structure.

It was inevitable, of course, that all this technical concern should lead back to tradition. The museums were ransacked; the arts of Egypt, Greece, Italy, Persia, Japan, the Primitives, Negro sculpture—everything was searched for new ideas of form, new revelations of old plastic secrets. And the more they searched the greater became the painters' disregard for naturalism and such offshoots as Futurism and Eclecticism. (Futurism was but an animated camera study. Eclecticism required intelligence in the acquisition of the style of the old masters, but so content were its practitioners to reiterate the language of imitation that they contributed nothing of their own. Eclecticism is one of those recurrent air pockets in art that eventually lead to a new academicism.)

Cubism triumphed with our more original painters because it taught the value of objective plasticism, by creating a desire in artists to subjugate nature, to organize and dominate it, instead of yielding to a subjective literature. The inventions of Cubism, in brief, have given us a new esthetic based upon the pure interplay of line, form and colors, divorced from realism and relying upon a deliberate, disinterested and supremely objective geometry. It is, first and last, an esthetic of intellectualism.

SURROUNDING SOCIAL CONDITIONS

It is impossible to dissociate the work of modern painters from the present conditions of our civilization. The upheaval in the thinking of contemporary artists is a natural evolution in our social development.

There has been a thoroughgoing overhauling of our attitude toward life, and man has, as a result, come in for a vast disillusion. Jogging along, placidly content with his three meals a day, a bed and some prideful propagation, there was little to disturb his almost perfect insulation against introspection. But with the com-

ing of the industrial revolution, with the telling factual discoveries of Science, there was small possibility of escaping some very obvious truths.

Examination brought a creeping skepticism about most of his rather pat dogmas, including, of course, his God. Surveyed in the light of the new Science all his beliefs—the certitude of his manner of living, his ethical conduct, his dignity and personal importance—received a complete laundering.

He found that his morality had become frayed and maladjusted with the years, that the emotions (and the traditions that grew around these emotions) that had constituted so important a part of his existence were but an uncomfortable legend which could no longer be lived. All those little flag-waving stand-up words like love, patriotism, religion and other shibboleths, had suffered a sad transmutation. No longer could he be stirred to the same emotional response, for, unfortunate predicament, these words had lost their former meaning.

Personalized grandeur had disappeared. The complete individualist found an urgent compulsion to be in harmony with the state, for, in the hitherto gross exaggeration of the ego (as evidenced in art by the Romantic movement), only the private personality was cultivated, without control and without regard for the public life of the community. This sudden realization of his personal insignificance in an ordered pattern of life brought man a tragic sense of futility. The abrupt destruction of his right to self-assertion, the decree that there be conformity, inevitably cheapened the importance of human passions.

In the ensuing march toward an engulfing futility man lived without depth, without sureness—a surface existence that laid no insistence upon inwardness and honored only those traits that were within the ordained pattern established by a priggish and conformist group. It was inevitable that he would become factual and attentive to the superficialities of mere existence.

Science became the new god—a substitute for the humanities and an official destroyer of all future errors. It gave man an enlarged interest in "how" to do things, in the fact of these things being. Here was something he could grasp and hold to—for it provided a definite knowledge. True, a knowledge of an outer rather than an inward world, but it was the product of the laboratory and so revered.

Even Science, however, could not give a satisfactory answer to man's new questioning of the purpose of his living.

Even if he acquired the perfect detachment necessary to a civilized viewpoint,

what pleasure could that detachment bring in assisting him to a positive outlook on life? Certainly none where there was nothing but a deep and corroding disillusion.

There was nothing in fact, upon which the intelligent man could build a satisfactory philosophy to support his change in living conditions and his new environment.

THE DOMINATION OF TECHNIQUE

This is the world the modern painter* enters, a world in revolt against Romanticism both in society and in art. Naturally, an art of defiance came into being, created by admiration for thought alone, and by complete contempt for the spindly and uncontrolled emotional orgies of the Romantic. And, also quite naturally, this interest in detached thinking brought the artist in contact with Science, which sought to carry control to its furthermost reaches.

The attitude of Science, which included a restless curiosity about how to do things, largely inspired the triumph of Cubism in teaching painters the how of technique—in creating a desire to experiment with the plastic secrets of the old masters and discover how the wheels went around.

But, always dominant, there was the inescapable fact that our artists, elevating thought to a supreme pedestal in painting, faced the same personal disillusion as their fellow men as regards their own fulfilment in life. The impulsion to paint was still extant, but there was nothing to say. There were no positive affirmations to make, and negations alone could not enlarge the domain of experience. The spiritual quality, for instance, which our artists still recognized in Greco was, alas, gone from them. Left only was a desire to experiment, to become scientific.

But, strangely enough, though they utilized this side of science for their technical problems, our painters ignored the possibility of extending the search-

* THOUGH WHAT I SHALL WRITE HERE APPLIES TO AMERICAN PAINTERS I AM PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH THE MODERN FRENCHMAN, BECAUSE FRANCE HAS BEEN THE BREEDING GROUND FOR ALL MAJOR MODERN MOVEMENTS IN PAINTING.

ing attitude of science toward an analysis of what they were doing with this technique or why they were so enamored with it. They have not paused to inquire into the fatuity of inventing a technique which has become so self-sufficient that it provides its own independent world.

They have become so fascinated with their discoveries in craftsmanship that they have grudged the time for inward investigation. Cognizance of externalities is the possession of everyone, but experience has disappeared. No destiny is within them; they have become permanently exiled from life.

Their amazing inventiveness in new technical discoveries, no matter how precocious, ill conceals the disintegration and decay of their private idealities. They are but building on art—creating art for art's sake, without significance, without enrichment of their personality.

The public, no longer requiring spiritual necessities, accepted this new art, so a ready communication was established. No questioning occurred, for, as H. M. Tomlinson points out, "we may doubt the warranty of the priest, but never that of the mathematician."

This inability to experiment with personal reactions led to an exaltation of objectivity—in this instance unworthy because it was but a glorification of externalities, of outward form. Recall certain of Cézanne's early baroque compositions, how he strove so desperately to create a mankind full of grandeur, and achieved only florid insincerity because faith was not there. He was unattuned to the raptures of an age he tried to recreate. And Cézanne, our great modern leader, our painting scientist, turned to his test tubes and discovered the cube, the cone and the cylinder. What gods these have become!

On the face of every "modern" canvass we see in martial array these cubes, cones and cylinders. They are our present-day language. Since our painters had nothing to say in these geometric forms, they have chosen to believe that these forms are what they have to say. Instead of using these symbols to convey a message, they are used as a self-sufficient idiom.

The new-found reverence for thought alone, aided by the revulsion from Romanticism, drove painters to the extreme of abstraction in the creation of a purely cerebral art divorced from any associations. If they had anything to say, they should have been alert enough to realize that the stringent geometry invented by Cézanne was but a means of acquiring control of one's craft, the better to express individual inspirations.

So confused have they become, however, that they have been unable to separate the aspect from the substance. Adeptness and uniformly high technical proficiency have deceived too many painters into the belief that the accoutrements of modernism are in themselves enough. But the fact that a canvas is clothed in the complete panoply of formal symbols does not conceal the crying emptiness so decidedly apparent when nothing worth while is inside the clothing.

A love of startling technical tricks has divorced our moderns from all actuality. They are so obsessed with this vain ceremony that no attention has been paid to the spiritual bankruptcy that has slowly but surely ensued.

It is largely true that ours is, more overwhelmingly than we like to consider, a civilization of externalization; and, if this is so, our painters are painting accurate portraits of our times. Being citizens of a spiritually bankrupt world they have become historians rather than prophets, and themselves exhibit the emptiness that envelops them.

There are some gleams through this heavy gloom. Picasso, Matisse, Chirico, Rouault, Rivera, Orozco, Marin, among others, are intent upon finding something above technique, something more self-revelatory—in the realm of highly sensitized personal emotion controlled by a modern detachment, an objectification of an experience that in the first instance was original and later became an enlargement of their own spiritual growth.

THE NEW APPROACH

Corot's sharp phrase "Celui qui suit est toujours en arrière"—who follows is always behind—is a bit of counsel the vast majority of modern painters should take to heart. The deadly regimentation of their thinking cannot produce pictures of a very high level. Contentment with the present fetishes of design and significant form serves only to enlarge the production of more spineless painting, completely divorced from any individual experiences.

It would seem wise for our tender moderns who scoff at and shy from primary emotions as from a plague, to venture a private imagination. Their sweet gen-

tility, their sexless thinking, get them nowhere, for what matters in art is the passion put into the work, the courage to place upon canvas the spiritual indelicacies that distinguish lonely experiences. More attention should be given to inward examination. There is so little to be gained in copying another painter's shallow externalities, so much to be acquired in solitary faring.

I believe the greatest development, the surest good, will come from the modern movement in art when our painters shall realize that their mathematics can be clothed in humanity, when they discover that "cosmic order" does not rule out a burning interest in their own living and in life about them.

What was wrong with the Romantic movement was an emotional exuberance that was uncontrolled, too often not even a personal emotion but an excitement at something foreign, picturesque or weird. Painters went about looking for strange things to paint. That isn't what I mean by personal or individual experience. Every man has in him the capacity for independent reactions, for constructive analysis of his own thoughts. Let him put them in paint. They will shine like stars in this new heaven of copybook symbols.

In one country surely there is already a magnificent attempt being made to discover a new individualism.

In Mexico, Rivera paints majestic, robust, throbbing murals that portray the life of the natives (a simple, primitive people). Powerfully, beautifully, Rivera has painted what he has felt: his own participation in sudden revolutions, his own love of the land, his own zeal for justice—painted in a passionate architecture that makes our modern abstractions appear arid and decadent in their devotion to surface arabesques.

For Rivera also, in technique, has the modern viewpoint. He went to school in Paris and there painted in an abstract manner that won him great praise. But upon his return to Mexico a new vitality seemed to enter him, a new reverence for humanity, for those eternal values that exist within a simple people. And into his murals and canvasses, grandly ordered, deeply clarified, came a new understanding and grandeur of emotion, guided by a genuine detachment.

Mexican painting has grown out of the traditions of the people, has established contact with the individual revelations of the artist, whether religious, poetic or realistic. Personal luxuriance is never practiced at the expense of formal realization. These Mexican artists have taken stock of themselves, have analyzed what they have seen and felt, and have, in solid painting language, spoken their own

truths, without repressions, without the nauseous hindrance of "good taste." Their sincerity, their pushing aside of Parisian fulminations in favor of their own development, should do much to point the way to our more alert contemporary painters.

Our moderns are capable of inspired productions of the mind, but in Mexico alone, in the work of Rivera, Orozco, Siqueiros, Merida, Goitia and others, do we find that Beethoven-like surge, that contact with human values, which, combined with a sublime order, was the possession of every great classic artist up to the dawn of our modern archaism.

II

THE AMERICAN SCENE

THE PIONEERS

Until the recent arrival of Homer, Eakins and Ryder as "America's Greatest Painters," little of any worth in painting was produced here. The reasons for this artistic dearth are, it seems to me, many, and I shall briefly try to analyze them.

The first settlers in this country found enormous land stretching before them, land which they would have to cultivate in order to live, and, besides, guard from ravage by Indians. They had to work hard, diligently, in unceasing industry. A pioneer people, they respected industry alone. Adventures of the mind and in the arts interested them little, for these are essentially the by-products of leisure and luxury. What adventures there were, took place solely as a result of their struggle with the land and the Indians, in acquisition of unexplored territory, in crude inventions for utilitarian purposes.

They allowed themselves religion—rather, they enforced religion. This, their only outlet, was a natural concomitant to their superb self-righteousness and a nice thing (together with whiskey) to exchange for land with the Indians. Even in religion the pioneers never followed the Christian precept of free giving of themselves; their religion was essentially masochistic, involving the imposition of restraints, burthens, and hysterical self-chastisement in the bull-headed, blunt notion that religion should never give pleasure. Emotion was taboo, and whenever it flared from members of the colonies it was effectively killed by good and sufficient means.

These American ancestors were canny business men (witness, even in private life, their examination of the potentialities of marriage as evidenced in the gentle practice of bundling). They were direct, single-minded, in the pursuit of their purposes. The smallness of their outlook led inevitably to a ruthlessness and moral arrogance that permitted no deviation from the set rules of their existence.

MODERN AMERICAN PAINTERS

All art is sensual and as such was against the Puritan ideal. In painting, music or verse, personal exposure was possible, and so banned. Of course, an even greater reason was that the arts were non-utilitarian, and what didn't pay its own way was looked at askance, even belligerently. Nothing for gain could be accomplished with painting; it was simply frivolous nonsense. The Cotton Mathers and Jonathan Edwards did all in their power, their morally arrogant power, to see that the arts were effectively frowned upon.

Up to comparatively recent days America has been intent completely upon bringing greater comfort to the masses. Good living conditions, quick travel, radio, political upheaval and change were major preoccupations. What wealth there was accumulated rarely led to individual cultivation of the arts. In the juvenile years of America, painting came into being purely as the means of securing a portrait of the family's outstanding members.

There was no search, no request for painting as art, only a desire for reproduction and perpetuation of exact facial and physical characteristics. Those painters who tilted at nature were rather self-conscious in their endeavors, and usually brought back a sentimentalized, apologetic version of their seeing.

The Puritan attitude against sensuality has existed through today. Its effective squelching of emotion has been one of the dominant factors that promoted present-day refinement and "good taste." More than any other agent it has barred American painters from any attempt at individual expression, and kept them grooved in delineations of acceptable scenes and subjects. This public weight, even now, shows little signs of being lifted.

EAKINS, HOMER AND RYDER

With the coming of this trinity, American critics became busy emitting loud hosannas in honor of the three greatest American artists. Yet I see no real reason for their acclaim, other than the typically American desire to pounce upon something American for praise. In these instances, surely, I believe touting the home talent a bit extravagant.

Eakins, with his serious, matter-of-fact mind, had a lamentable inclination to transcend the province of a portrait, to go beyond painting into literature. He had the Puritan ideal of giving the sitter a run for his money; his idea of a proper presentation was to surround the portrait with all the pediment that was part and parcel of the sitter's occupation or hobby. Admissible, perhaps, if his powers of organization were good enough to bring these extraneous matters within the picture's orb, but disastrous because he had no such great powers, and allowed the picture to become too loosely knit. Eakins had a sound, somber color sense and a rather unblinking honesty. Some of his less pretentious portraits, severely descriptive, remain among our better creations, possessing a ruggedness that is grievously lacking among our present-day painters.

Homer at best was a super-illustrator. Today he would be at home in The Saturday Evening Post, in the collection of a gentleman sportsman who admired the sea, or in the collection of rabid patrioteers who collect Americana. As painting, his details of sloops are undoubtedly correct (I have been heatedly assured they are by good amateur sailors), but never beyond illustration. The over-dramatized movement he seeks is the aim of any successful commercial illustrator today; Homer happened to be better than average.

Ryder, the most boomed of this trinity, had a remarkable personality, and so many likeable legends have been recounted of late that the gentleman has profited greatly by this extra-territorial matter. In truth, his so-called poetry was a mixture of dense, muddy pigmentation, and a very incomplete ability to present clearly to the spectator whatever he was trying to say. There is no clean-cut painting, no good construction, simply a blurred visualization such as we would never accept from a second-rate versifier. Good poetry demands clear thinking and sound craftsmanship, and so does good painting. The American insistence upon labelling poetic anything connected with a moon and a dark night at sea has worked wonders for the new popularity of Ryder. His sentimental imagination was never more than a popular one, and so never first-rate. Everything he did was in one monotonous key, no variations, no enlargements. Marin, for instance, in qualities of thought and painting, is more sensitive and more lyric than Ryder, and his compositions display a far keener insight into his problem than Ryder was able to grasp, which explains the high distinction of a Marin creation in contrast to the irresolute groping so evident in a Ryder.

Legends help dealers but they have no place in pure painting.

THE DEATH OF AN IDEA

Eakins, Homer and Ryder have no real bearing or influence upon our contemporary artists. Economic conditions, coming to us from the Puritan pioneers, have, to a large degree, influence upon these contemporary artists' attitudes, but the major domination has been the local French search for form and design, which fitted in only too neatly with the American hesitation to discuss personal revelations.

If, in the previous chapter, I have criticized the leaders of the modern movement in art for their futile preoccupation with symbols and their rupture with humanity, I criticize American painters on the much graver charge that they blindly copy these very shortcomings, reaching into others' pockets for a food that is rarely better than patent medicine.

America has a number of very intelligent painters who have had no difficulty in understanding the theory of our modern classicism. Nor have they had any difficulty in themselves being able to construct a picture along sound architectural lines. Demuth, Dickinson, Sheeler, Blume and a few others are probably as perfect craftsmen as are to be found painting today. And the general level in America is extraordinarily high, most of our younger men having gone to the Frenchmen for tutelage and from them received a basic training in their craft.

Unfortunately, our painters failed to understand that the lessons they received were just lessons and not God-given precepts for all future work. They are still seeing only through French eyes, copying the surface, even the subject matter of French canvasses. Inevitably they grasp only the pattern of design in their own modernism.

They are busy translating Cézanne into English. But their attempts to follow the teachings of Cézanne and Picasso have led only to placid restatements of what these two artists have seen. No fresh ideas are injected, no new seeing is attempted. Canvasses by the mile are turned out, having a muted good taste, but unoriginal, precious and—dull. Everything smacks of the hot house. With all the art cultures of the world in their back yards, American painters spend their entire time watering them.

MODERN AMERICAN PAINTERS

Nowhere, I believe, can there be found greater eclecticism than in America. McFee, Kroll, Pach, Miller, Bruce, Speicher, DuBois, Beal, and a hundred others are but too content to work in set molds. Illustrators like Luks and Sloan, and globe-trotting romanticists like Kent and Pop Hart are, in my opinion, adding nothing to the plane of modern art.

Even that blind alley Impressionism still has its full quota of American allies, headed by Glackens and Lawson. Fortunately, Cubism also claimed its adherents, but its limitations were unperceived, so that our painters as yet have not secured the real value of its contribution. The plangent architecture of Benton, Baylinson, Spencer, Hirsch, Robinson et al. is to me but an aimless following of others' ideas, while the styles of Picasso, Matisse, Bracque and Derain glare at us from the walls of every American exhibit. Even Van Gogh, Chirico and Pascin have almost as many imitators here as in Paris.

No one expects painters to come into being full-grown. To reach maturity they must naturally absorb the lessons to be gained from the old masters and the best artists of today. But certainly it is also necessary that some fresh thinking arising from individual experience be added to what one has learned.

Except among the few men I have treated in individual chapters I do not find any healthy signs of original impulsions. Our paintings are museums of art in which past and present masters are built upon and their styles and ideas liberally and unimaginatively plundered. It is only necessary to stand before these paintings to discover their emptiness. They contain trivial, unimportant epigrams which came forth stillborn, barren phrases executed by men who are only clever technicians.

These technical gymnastics are not, our painters to the contrary notwithstanding, enlargements of experience. Well-blown soap bubbles may convey a sense of pride to the blower, but their empty evanescence is too self-evident. Unless there be some genuine beauty, feeling, emotion, majesty—call it what you will—within the cloak of technique, we shall continue to be bored and depressed at what our painters display.

Curiously enough, however, they prate about "spirit" and "spiritual quality." They may have been fired with this quality when they stood before a bare canvas, but somewhere in the process of creation it was lost and they began "painting" and making patterns and striking poses, and what came forth was another abortive addition to the long stretch of American mediocrity.

MODERN AMERICAN PAINTERS

Present-day American painting in general offers nothing more substantial than office-memoranda, which have not as yet been converted into complete essays.

TENDENCY TO SOFTNESS

This utter lack of originality is not the only fault to be found with American painters. They suffer, too, from the Puritan hang-over of shame at any revelation of emotion. This characteristic has sweetened their stale ideas with a sickly refinement, unfortunately become dominant everywhere.

An aggravating attack of diabetes besets them. Most of our painters seem intent upon a breathless suppression of vitality—and this applies to ideas as well as form and color. Emaciation has attained large-scale production; on all sides we witness a desire for pallid under-statement, a pervading gentility that has led to hopeless emasculation.

There are but few instances of a lusty masculine seeing. Marin, Blume and Dickinson have not succumbed to this sapping influence. But there are countless others—Ault, Soyer, Sheeler, Walkowitz, Ganso, Hartley, Stuart Davis, Brook, among many—whose stifling refinement has played havoc with their otherwise marked ability.

It seems strange to find this cloying quality so dominant in American painting, for we are not a gentle race. On the contrary, in our social and business life there is a rawness, a self-assertion that is almost raucous in its universality. Only in the arts has the smothering influence of the Puritan ideal come down to us intact. This, combined with a vast deference to others' ideas, has led our painters into a mincing obsession with pure painting problems, away from any considerations of reality.

Technique is a god that has made gentlemen of American painters. They are fashionably clothed but they are minus that virility which is essential to an intense manhood of rich personal reality. The lovely, eunuch-like refinement of their canvasses has no more of the stout quality of felt emotion than a stick of

peppermint. All this strained tranquillity, this hushed seeing is proving too erosive to whatever visions they might have possessed. A little more of the explosively vigorous perception which has occasionally been captured in the water colors of Marin and in the oils of Blume would bring a new life, a hardier vitality. The controlled ecstasy of such modern madmen as Picasso, Rivera and Rouault is beyond them, for they have become too frightened at any approach to truth.

Their currency has become art for art's sake. Within their sheltered art colonies they ineffectually play with the sugared but meatless bones of technique. A fungus imitativeness has brought them to the edge of decay. They should attempt to find themselves, no matter whether their discovery shall come from the heart, brain, eyes or hips—just so it be discovery and self-analysis. So it bleed from the acuteness of their own personal vision.

The retention of the Puritan ideal has become too harmful to the imaginative life of our artists. So long as they continue to practice the obvious withdrawal of themselves from their art, their painting must continue an insolent example of to what decorative depths Cubism may fall in the hands of lesser men.

POSSIBLE DESTINATION

America is a polyglot, disjointed nation incorporating many provincial attempts at civilization. North, South, East and West provide sectional contributions to our culture. We have developed too quickly as an economic force in world affairs to have sufficient leisure to become graphically creative and responsive. Each section is intent upon its own economic betterment, in securing greater physical comfort for its masses. And, as each section carves its own path, it is also laying the foundation for its own individual culture. There will be something American about each of these attempts, but subtle or severe nuances must appear to identify each effort.

It is because we must draw upon the classical sources of all nations for their art cultures that we cannot now have a national art, as France, in Derain and Utrillo, has national artists who receive their inspiration from centuries of

painting tradition.* Our experience in the arts is too limited to attempt the nationalism, or Americanism, demanded by many who prefer this to art. Our American painters need most the luxury of personal, unashamed experiences. Their canvasses will probably exhibit an American spirit if they themselves live the life of America. But there should be no attempt to give our patrioteers post-cards of American scenes. Burchfield and Hopper aren't artists because they choose to be Americans.

The only originality, the only adventurous thinking now taking place in America occurs in our big business offices. Our business men have the courage to be innovators, to indulge in imaginative flights. Their ability to meet, to create, new needs for their products has made them the leaders of the world's industrial forces.

It seems strange to me that in the midst of this economic upheaval, this creation of a new vibrant civilization, our painters have been so content with their flabby thinking. They have no contact with the forces about them. They shrink from actuality.

Amusingly enough, they have even taken over the decree from Paris which inveighed against the subject as a creator of literature. They have been busy inventing systems within which any subject can fit, without regard for the subject but with supreme respect for the pattern. Honest craftsmen who have a traditional respect for their medium must inevitably revolt against these standardized reactions.

As a measure toward finding themselves, American painters must realize, as Mexican artists have realized, that the subject is as essential as the style, that it is from the model a picture must derive its intensity, as well as its form, design and color. When Americans have some genuine emotion to start with, they will find that technical problems become secondary. Pure feeling will generate its

* OUR POVERTY IN THE GRAPHIC ARTS IS PARALLELED BY THE UNBELIEVABLE STUPIDITY AND SLAVERY OF OUR ARCHITECTS. THE ENORMOUS POSSIBILITIES THAT ARE THE MODERN CITY ARCHITECT'S HAVE BEEN MET BY FATUOUSLY DRAWING UPON THEIR HAND–BOOKS OF CLASSICAL STYLES FOR INSPIRATION. WITH THE CHANCE TO DESIGN BUILDINGS TO MEET A NEW CIVILIZATION'S NEEDS, TO CREATE A NEW LIVING ESTHETIC DETERMINED BY FUNCTIONAL PLANNING, OUR ARCHITECTS HAVE GIVEN US DULL ARRANGEMENTS OF MASSES AND SET–BACKS AND BAD SPATIAL SOLUTIONS OF THEIR FENESTRATION PROBLEMS. ANACHRONISTIC BATTLEMENTS AND OTHER SENSELESS GOTHIC AND GREEK SYMBOLS COULD BE SCRAPED FROM OUR BUILDINGS BY THE TON. AND IMAGINE A THIRTY–STORY BUILDING DESIGNED TO RESEMBLE A COLONIAL COTTAGE.

ONLY A FEW MEN HAVE CONSIDERED THE COMPLETELY REVOLUTIONARY ASPECT OF THE THING THEY ARE CREATING. THESE MEN, AS YET LOST IN LARGE OR SMALL DESIRE FOR ORNAMENTATION,

own morale. Marin's return to nature, his emotional reactions to nature, preclude all considerations of technique. Blume, in attempting to depict our civilization, does not fit it into previously conceived patterns. His themes dictate the pictorial composition.

All about them our painters must see our new forces, our engineering marvels and dynamic machines, the life within our restless and vital cities, must establish contact and from such contact enter into creation. In a new sobriety they must find the profound rhythm of this formative country. When it has been found they will need no set patterns; their discoveries will call forth original inventions to meet their needs. They will stop incubating others' children and generate their own.

I do not ask for historians, but for seers. An American art will come into being when our painters become not Americans but individuals who see America and themselves with fresh eyes, who think in untrodden paths, and who will be craftsmen who use their materials only to express the primary thing they have to say.

Some of our painters are seeking this new vision. Vincent Canadé, somber, introspective, lyric, is one of our most interesting artists; Benjamin Kopman's fevered creations are as yet unordered but when that order comes he will be worth watching; Morris Kantor is working through Cubism into a more lyric plasticism; Walt Kuhn, thundering, melodramatic, is yet showing the way to a more sensitive generation; Alfred Maurer, intense in his struggle for a personal revelation; Bernard Karfiol, still too obsessed with memories of Renoir, Gauguin and Picasso to evolve a personal palette and more individual quality of ideas and design; and Elsie Driggs who has an individual eye and is developing rapidly.

Man Ray, Joseph Stella, Feininger, McKnight Kauffer are expatriates in France, Germany and England. They might be among our most important Americans were they still resident here.

WILL INEVITABLY WORK THROUGH AND EVOLVE A SEVERER, SIMPLER EXPRESSION FROM THEIR NEW MATERIALS. THE HONEST USE OF THESE NEW MATERIALS GIVES OUR ARCHITECTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE AN ARCHITECTURE AS PURE AS CUBISM, AS AUSTERE AS THE EGYPTIAN PYRAMIDS.

RECAPITULATION

I believe the present moribund state of American painting is due only to a misguided conception of the purpose of modern art. The imitation, the flaccid refinement, the lack of original ideas will all be swept aside when we see the real aim.

Modern art, as practiced by our leaders, is simply the expression of an inner reality in terms of an universal order. When we throw aside the present obsession with technical problems and give our eyes a freer scope we shall attain fulfilment. We must see in order that we may say. We have the greatest craftsmen America has yet had; when they come of age emotionally ours should be a stirring, magnificent art—different from Mexico's, but with a new consciousness, a new lift all its own.

III

SOME IMPORTANT AMERICAN PAINTERS OF TODAY

PETER BLUME

was born in Russia on October 27, 1906, and was brought to America at the age of five. He was educated in the Brooklyn public schools. He studied commercial art in evening school, and from the ages of fifteen to eighteen he was an attendant at the Educational Alliance, the Art Students' League and the Beaux Arts. No teacher influenced him in these formative years, these schools merely providing for him a place where he could use an easel and work from models. Then for almost two years he did not paint—studying, seeing, analyzing the Flemish primitives, Cubism and Purism, discovering technique, formal problems, plastic pictorial secrets.

His first one-man show was held in February, 1930 at the Daniel Gallery. His paintings are in the following collections: Museum of Modern Art, Samuel A. Lewisohn, Ferdinand Howald, Sidney Janowitz, W. S. Schwabacher, Sturgis Ingersoll, Mrs. Paul Osborn, Morton Goldsmith, John T. Spaulding and Ernest Robson.

That group of American painters whose refinement is so perilously close to euphuism has been aptly called the "Immaculate School." Until about three years ago Peter Blume was painting in their exquisitely breathless manner, but at present he is striking out with a zest and driving force that completely dissociate him from their influence.

Here is one of the few painters in America who is contributing a decisively masculine viewpoint to his art. Strongly individual, he has a boldness and brilliance that will shock the spectator accustomed to our general whipped cream and tinseled flummery. His is the realization of what our genuine modern artists have been seeking: the construction of a picture along sound architectural lines, sober, thoughtful, pregnant with esthetic ideas. Ideas of the utmost distinction that are his own and not the shabby, outworn habiliment of a dozen other modernists.

PETER BLUME

He did not arrive full-statured. Only in his last few pictures has he adequately realized what he has been seeking. Before, he exhibited the customary good taste, a certain humor and fluency in landscape and figure work, but no more than any number of our artists has given us. These latest paintings are like the progression of a good serial, each new chapter an exciting prelude to the next. Each separate problem has furthered his equipment, and today that equipment is not surpassed by any other American artist.

His interests are all about him: America's gigantic steel bridges, the factories that are the basis of our material wealth, the harbor and boats that bring us commerce, and many kindred motifs. He has brought to these subjects a rugged structural significance and formal beauty little realized heretofore, for Blume, as an artist, has not asked that beauty come to him whole; it is his function to create beauty. He has the understanding and strength that have been necessary for the real interpretation of these American emblems.

Similar American motifs have been painted again and again with an eye for detail and a resolutely meager and myopic viewpoint that is almost dazzlingly stupid. Nothing has been added, no elisions made, no creative expression attempted. There has been no understanding of the grave, powerful grandeur within these scenes, but only a desire to fit them into some preconceived design or pattern.

Consider Blume's contribution. His objects are recognizable, but there is no attempt at verisimilitude; there is, in fact, distortion, wilful, valid and justifiable, to make these motifs elements of a comprehended design, parts of a vast creative plan to interpret their personal significance in terms of a plastic reality.

I can best explain my meaning by analyzing "Parade," his latest picture. This painting is extremely interesting in its marked advance in attitude, design, emotional intensity—an emotion never engendered by romantic or representational overtones, but by a clear, liberated appeal to the esthetic sensibility of the spectator. The lucid organization of this picture, its carefully plotted architecture, the vibrant criss-cross progression of its planes upon a vast geometrical scaffolding, its fascinating interplay of cylinders, rectangles, circles, have a movement, an exciting rhythm that is deeply stirring. The forms are marked and given solidity by the razor-like directness of the contours. There is a lack of any undue plastic emphasis; the planes march in stately lateral and vertical rhythms toward the central arrangement of ventilators through which there is a triumphal thrust and escape out of the picture. All his elements have an inevitable sequence—a

moving orchestral continuity in which each volume has its rightful and preordained position in space.

His color has definite form and lends sensitive spatial values to the organization. The deep purple door, the black disk, the red of the house shading into pink, the dark and light greys, the blueness of the ventilators against yellow ochres, browns, the pure white against the greyness of the armorial forms—give subtle geometric aid to the progressions and recessions.

And his feeling for the various textures within the armor, of their contrasts to the other textures within the canvas, of the sensation of the armorial forms against the modern forms is delicately right. I may add that there seems to me no objective logic in the introduction of these armorial forms against such a modern setting other than the arbitrary one of search after form, texture, synthesis. There is no symbolic or satiric significance.

This picture is a distinct enlargement of Blume's outlook; it is a striving for something beyond what he has hitherto accomplished. In the fortunate merging of healthy ideas and impressive technique "Parade" is one of the finest achievements in American art—in which it has no precedent. To understand such painting we must go to Picasso or Léger for their equally candid posing of technical problems, for their plastic philosophy of order, of drastic architecture, of spirited ideas; for Blume inherits nothing from any past or living American artist. His highly keyed consciousness, the classical severity of his expression, the fertility and strength of his conception, make me feel that in Blume America for the first time may have a young painter who can develop into a world force.

One must remember that Blume is young—only twenty-four. In three short years he has made this tremendous transition from pleasant, semi-romantic painting to an inventive originality that is almost austere in its devotion to the realization of a full expression of his own experiences. Even now his painting has an amazing authority, a vitality and breadth that are usually only the outgrowth of maturity.

Coming years will bring enrichment of his visual experience, ripening of his intellectual powers, for Blume has in him that vital urge that will never allow him to stand still. He has a vast self-confidence, a vigorous ambition. His development should be steady and free from sheer virtuosity and cleverness. Already he stands in the front rank of America's painters.

CHARLES DEMUTH

was born at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1883. He studied under Chase and Anshutz at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

He is represented in the following collections: Metropolitan Museum, Brooklyn Museum, Cleveland Museum, Chicago Fine Arts Institute, Barnes Foundation, Phillips Memorial Gallery, Fogg Art Museum, Gallery of Living Art, Ferdinand Howald, Philip L. Goodwin, Mrs. Alma Wertheim, Alfred Stieglitz, Georgia O'Keeffe, Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney, Mrs. J. Montgomery Sears and Robert Locher. His work is shown at An American Place and the Kraushaar Gallery.

Clive Bell in his book, "Art," advanced the theory that the modern artist is not concerned with the emotions of life, no matter how important they might seem in his work. It is Mr. Bell's belief that the modern artist is concerned primarily with a very special kind of emotion—the esthetic emotion.

Mr. Bell also provides that infallible yardstick by which we may estimate the worth of modern art—"significant form." And he it is who made the astonishing discovery that great works of art are created in a spasm of ecstasy.

Now, no matter how amusing these last two opinions may be, his first statement should be challenged, for this same theory is now being used as a rallying cry by all those artists who are engaged in formal exercises, and whose complete lack of content leads them to decry any approach to actuality as something without the esthetic realm.

Undoubtedly the efforts of Cubism require on the part of the spectator a quicker intelligence and a sharper cognizance of painting problems than do those dear old academic paintings in which admiration for the sea gull's flight and a proper appreciation of the artist's ability to catch Betty's sweet smile are enough. But intelligence has also been required to understand the forms, the design and measure of Rubens and Greco. These two artists had as much to give in technique as the most modern of our moderns. The alert, sensitive spectator has

always perceived these qualities, for cerebration is not a new element in painting.

Rubens and Greco arrived at their finally proposed esthetic emotions through a large scrutiny of life. With emotions aroused by definite representational matter they succeeded in expressing their personal experiences in definite esthetic form. Their major interest was not story-telling but an attempt to capture the spirit of what they saw, not its factual image. Not particulars, but the reality interested them. And this reality was organized by a consciousness at all times aware of the special requirements of the picture.

The esthetic emotion is not an isolated one, as Mr. Bell would have us believe. It must receive impetus and nourishment from contact with life. The emotions urged by life, fed by actualities, are later interpreted in esthetic language, but the artist has frankly accepted his concern with life as the motivation of his impulsion to paint. There has been no creation in a vacuum. Those painters who have attempted to divorce themselves from life, to attain a purer esthetic expression, have succeeded only in making arabesques of color and line. Of course, even these arabesques may in themselves create emotion of a sort, but they are essentially only a superior kind of decoration; only flat patterns are evolved. Never do we see the suggestion of a third dimension, because only representational objects can give that suggestion.

The special kind of emotion which Mr. Bell respects is displayed by the Cubist abstractionists. Yet Cubism has been but a strenuous effort to recover the trade secrets of the old masters. Each great picture has in it everything that Cubism so baldly states, but in addition to the skeletonized framework of Cubism these pictures also contained a curiously intense grasping at the structure of life. Certainly even Picasso never intended his exercises as a flight from life. Though he may go back to them intermittently as a means of keeping alert to the artist's problems, his present and past concern has shown only that he believes the artist has the right not to be restricted to the use of any set statement of facts. Only minor artists with nothing to say have taken Cubism as the all of saying and with circles, rectangles and other forms neatly balanced, proclaim their products the result of pure esthetic emotions.

Representational overtones, where merely descriptive or put in purely for qualities of recognition, are and always have been deadly to a work of art. There is, however, something beyond this, a genuine union of ideas and experiences

with formal design which can be deeply moving. After all, the importance of representation in a picture lies not in fidelity to details but in the emotional reaction to the natural forms, and in the ability to convey the artist's intense vision through ordered expression.

To particularize: the works of Charles Demuth exhibit as intelligent a search for natural forms, balance, measure, spatial values as the best of the Cubist abstractions. There is the same formal order, the same intellectualization. The plus lies in the ability of Demuth to attain a more lyric expression because of his perception of the virtues of the objects he portrays. His initial impulse sprang from these virtues rather than from mere patterns.

From his granaries, fire escapes, buildings, smokestacks, fruits and vegetables Demuth has created a world of individual vitality. Sincerity and truth are dominant. Never attempting to storm dramatic heights, this artist nevertheless has given us his own full inner design as well as the personal design of these objects. There is no fumbling; everything is clean-cut, concise, pure.

The largess of beauty given us in his flower pieces and vegetable arrangements is like chamber music, informed with taste and elegance. His paintings of factories and other buildings are more akin to the symphony, full-throated, vibrant, in a deeper key. Starkly simple, they have no particulars surrounding them. Demuth has been sensitive to the less obvious essential forms of the thing he paints and has put down the plastically significant facts. Notice in them we do not seek mere resemblance. We are thoroughly conscious of the deeper penetration of the artist, through and beyond representation into rigid organization, into an esthetic at all times governed by the integrity of the artist's experience in his exposure to reality.

Some of the fastidiousness of Watteau and Fragonard is in his painting, for these elegants helped form Demuth's taste, but never to such an extent that his canvasses are over-refined. The elegance that is Demuth's is compounded of well-bred, civilized ideas realized plastically. Severity, urbanity, freshness, whatever the picture demands, Demuth furnishes. He attains a general synthesis but never at the expense of intense study of the individually important parts of the picture.

His color is not indispensable, for his drawing is complete in itself. When color has been used, however, it also assumes form and aids his spatial values. So expert a draughtsman is he that his early illustrations remain the best we have yet seen done in America.

CHARLES DEMUTH

Demuth's is an unexhausted state of mind constantly cultivating the rhythmic accents of America. The delicacy of his ideas together with his discipline in execution has made him the creator of a finely organized world, without staleness and infused with a happily luminous imagination. His vital lyricism has brought him safely through a tendency at times to become a little dry.

PRESTON DICKINSON

was born in New York in 1891. He studied painting at the Art Students' League, but secured his real foundations at the Louvre from 1910 to 1915 while in Europe. He has been in Canada many times since then. In the summer of 1930 he again returned to Europe, this time in search of a place to paint where living expenses were not top-heavy and where presentable food could be secured at reasonable prices. His work is on exhibit at the Daniel Gallery. He is represented in the following museums: Brooklyn, Omaha, Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, Columbus, Hartford, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Gallery of Living Art, Fogg Art Museum; and in the following private collections: Phillips Memorial Gallery, Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney, Ferdinand Howald, Samuel A. Lewisohn, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Mrs. C. H. Russell, Jr., John T. Spaulding, the late Arthur B. Davies, Sturgis Ingersoll, Maurice Speiser, W. S. Schwabacher, A. Lieberman, Mrs. C. P. Curtis, Mrs. J. R. Force, Stephen Clark and John O'Hara Cosgrave.

I once asked Dickinson why he and other modern American painters so sedulously avoided painting the human figure. His answer was, "Perhaps it's because models are too expensive," which was an evasion on his part. He had no real interest in the figure. Some time before I had put the same question to a gallery owner, with reference to the work of another prominent American painter. He surprised me by pulling out of his racks a water color of a nude woman by this artist. The picture shrieked of repressions. Is it because of this that our American moderns avoid figure work? There is so little of it being done, and that mostly by our more academic painters. Still life and landscape seem to be safer ground upon which to tread, and these are the major subjects chosen by our artists. Dickinson also confines himself to this limited area, but within it he has created some very alive, arresting pictures.

PRESTON DICKINSON

He has made no attempt at decor, being always alert to the plastic demands of the composition. From Cézanne and Japanese prints in the main, comes his exciting, if slightly tortured, talent for organization. In his spacing, his comprehension of forms, his exact sense of color, Dickinson has no superior in America.

In fact, Dickinson to me is the symbol of all that is good and bad in American painting. Sharply intelligent, he is a master technician who need concede nothing to European moderns in his knowledge of his craft. As they, he constructs his pictures in brilliant intellectual order, and as well brings to them a certain heat and feeling that definitely stamp them his creations. But he also shares the present American weakness in his evasion of anything too hotly concerned with life.

I remember Roger Fry's lament in his book on "Cézanne" that some of the old masters never turned to still life, because in still life humanity does not intervene, and "we frequently catch the purest self-revelation of the artist." I lament the reverse, that Dickinson and others with their high technical abilities confine themselves so entirely to still life. The old masters had all the technical skill they needed, so much in fact that an army of Cubists are still hard at work attempting to recover their trade secrets. But no attempt is being made to savor the rich, full-bodied zest in life that was no particular secret of these same old masters—in fact was blurted out all over the canvas for all to see. It remained for the moderns to dig deeper and discover the technique. Unlike a good cook who can never be satisfied with the tastiness of someone else's pies until that recipe becomes her own, our modern painter finds the recipe and bakes nothing but the crust. The salty ingredients that make the pie are forgotten. Personally, I should like a little intervention by humanity, and though the self-revelation might not be so pure, it would probably be many degrees more interesting. I have always had a liking for a little impurity.

Dickinson, as I have said, also sums up all the best qualities in American painting. Those qualities I have amply outlined in previous chapters. It is a pity that economic conditions force him to go to Europe, that he may live in comfort and greater security on his limited income. Man Ray left for lack of appreciation on this side, but certainly Dickinson had ardent supporters. Of course, he will continue his same high standard for his own work, as that was not at all dependent upon residence in America. I trust he will return, and that his work will continue to be exhibited here. We could ill afford his permanent loss.

ARTHUR G. DOVE

was born in Canandaigua, New York, on August 2, 1880, of English-American stock. He attended private and public schools, and was graduated from Cornell University with a Bachelor of Arts degree. He has spent some time in farming and has been an illustrator for some of our more popular magazines. He has been continuously sponsored by Alfred Stieglitz in the face of a hostile and non-understanding public.

Dove is represented in the following collections: Phillips Memorial Gallery, Ferdinand Howald, Philip L. Goodwin, Alfred Stieglitz, Paul Rosenfeld, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Strand, Herbert J. Seligmann, Mrs. Charles J. Liebman, Mrs. Edward Norman. His work may be seen at An American Place.

Dove has written me a letter descriptive of what he has been trying to accomplish.

"At the age of nine I painted, studying with Newton Weatherly of Geneva, N.Y.

"I was unable to devote all of my time to it until 1907–1908 in France where I was free for eighteen months, working in the country.

"Then back to America and discovered that at that time it was not possible to live by modern art alone. Made a living by farming and illustrating to support the paintings.

"To understand painting one must live with it. The speed of today leaves very few time to really live with anything, even ourselves. That too painting has to meet.

"Then there was the search for a means of expression which did not depend upon representation. It should have order, size, intensity, spirit, nearer to the music of the eye.

"If one could paint the part that goes to make the spirit of painting and leave out all that just makes tons and tons of art.

ARTHUR G. DOVE

"There was a long period of searching for a something in color which I then called 'a condition of light.' It applied to all objects in nature, flowers, trees, people, apples, cows. These all have their certain condition of light, which establishes them to the eye, to each other, and to the understanding.

"To understand that clearly go to nature, or to the Museum of Natural History and see the butterflies. Each has its own orange, blue, black; white, yellow, brown, green, and black, all carefully chosen to fit the character of the life going on in that individual entity.

"After painting objects with those color motives for some time, I began to feel the same idea existing in form. This had evidently been known by the Greeks, as in going over conic sections again, with this in mind, I found that they were called 'Maenechmian Triads.' Maenechmus was an early Greek sculptor, and invented these triads.

"This choice of form motives of course took the paintings away from representation in the ordinary sense.

"Then one day I made a drawing of a hillside. The wind was blowing. I chose three forms from the planes on the sides of the trees, and three colors, and black and white. From these was made a rhythmic painting which expressed the spirit of the whole thing. The colors were chosen to express the substances of those objects and the sky. There was the earth color, the green of the trees, and the cyan blue of the sky. These colors were made into pastels carefully weighed out and graded with black and white into an instrument to be used in making that certain painting.

"There were nine others, each with its own different motive. I took them to Stieglitz. He made room for them at '291' in 1910.

"It was a place where anything could happen. A remarkable place. People, paintings, photographs, and writings, all working as in a laboratory.

"Stieglitz—and had it not been for the patient efforts of this one man modern painting in America might still be in the dark ages . . . for years he fought for the very life of what is today—Marie Rapp, Hodge (the elevator boy), Marin, Maurer, Haviland, Haskell, Weber, Walkowitz, Hutch Hapgood, Mabel Dodge, Cézanne, Picasso, Rodin, Matisse, Picabia, Hartley, Demuth, Dewald, Carlos, deZayas, Strand, Seligmann, Zoler, Paul Rosenfeld, Agnes Ernst Meyer, Baron de Meyer, Steichen, Elizabeth and Donald Davidson, Beckett and Rhoades, John Quinn, Leo Stein, Gertrude Stein—and that Magazine called 'Camera Work.'

ARTHUR G. DOVE

"Then came O'Keeffe with those burning water colors.

"Later the choice of form motive was reduced from the plane to the line. That happened one day in trying to draw a waterfall. The line was the only thing that had speed enough.

" 'The Cow' 1911 is an example of the line motive freed still further.

"The line at first followed the edges of planes, or was drawn over the surface, and was used to express actual size, as that gave a sense of dimension; later it was used in and through objects and ideas as force lines, growth lines, with its accompanying color condition.

"Feeling that the 'first flash' of an idea gives its most vivid sensation, I am at present in some of the paintings (see 'Distraction' here reproduced, plate 19) trying to put down the spirit of the idea as it comes out. To sense the 'pitch' of an idea as one would a bell.

"It is the form that the idea takes in the imagination rather than the form as it exists outside.

"This is no rule, nor method, but leaves the imagination free to work in all directions with all dimensions that are or may have been realized."

The art of Dove rarely depends upon a living emotion, because he has not chosen those familiar forms upon which we depend for recognition. His elements are definitely plastic, and, consequently, give a purely artistic pleasure. This esthetic he is seeking has translated itself at times in arabesques of color, in form, and in a daring evolution of line. Always, however, this translation is a search for the spirit of the thing he paints, a depiction of the warmth of that image in his imagination.

During these many years of exhibiting to a darkly unresponsive public Dove has diligently explored the deepest ravines of his own inventive romantic temperament. It is a temperament at all times sensitive, well-bred and highly poetic, of an intensity possessed by few other American artists.

Comparisons with Ryder have naturally occurred because of the poetry that has been common to both. Ryder's has been the imagination of a man painting under moonlight, while Dove has brought his fresh, youthful visions out into the bright sunlight. He never glosses over a thought; it comes forth sharp, unblurred, guided by a pure linear skill and feeling for color.

What has amazed me in following Dove over a period of years is the fact that

in all his paintings we still sense a beginning, a striving for something as yet uncrystallized. He has used every artifice in an attempt to express his meaning—bits of paper, wood, tin, and other metals, as though the canvas itself cannot furnish him that substance, texture or meaning he is trying to convey. And where other artists have stood still after developing technical skill, Dove is constantly searching in an unending strife to leap beyond the limitations of tradition and find that new medium that can best express his new and innocent vision.

A room of his pictures suggests an air of incompletion—not of indecision, but of some lack of real fruition, as if they were but notes, fragments to suggest a fuller later development. Were these spiritual imaginings to secure a final, clarified expression, Dove's would be one of the greatest contributions of this generation. As they now stand they perform the important function of stirring the spectator with a visual magic that is our closest approach to "the music of the eye."

MARSDEN HARTLEY

was born January 4, 1877 in Lewiston, Maine, of English parents, naturalized citizens of the United States for sixty years. He received a grammar school education. At the age of fifteen he began his art studies in the Cleveland School of Art. On a scholarship he came to New York. In his first year he studied in the Chase School under Luis Mora and William Chase. The following four years were spent at the National Academy of Design under Edgar Ward and Frances Jones, as a contemporary of Maurice Sterne, Walkowitz and others.

"Segantini, Swiss impressionistic realist, through a reproduction in Jugend, showed me how to begin painting my own Maine mountains, at Center Lovell and North Lovell, Maine. Therefore, Segantini was my first direct influence, progressing to him from the student's admiration of Inness, Wyant, Homer, Martin. My next marked influence derived from contact with Albert P. Ryder through his 'Moonlight Marine,' shown me by N. E. Montross. I then made the acquaintance of Ryder himself, and saw 'Macbeth' and 'The Tempest' in his apartment—unforgetable experience.

"Eventually went to Europe after being impressed by Picasso, Cézanne, Courbet and Maillol, and it is now Courbet and Maillol who satisfy me most, chiefly Maillol. Spent four years in Berlin and various intervals in France. Returned to America in 1930 to escape the Americanization of Europe.

"Esthetic ideas: from belief in the imagination, then in expressionism, and now, the return to nature as the only relief from present hyper-intellectualism and fear of the objective world. Reasons for painting: clarification of self."

He is represented in the following collections: Phillips Memorial Gallery, Barnes Foundation, Ferdinand Howald, Alfred Stieglitz, Paul Rosenfeld, Mrs. Alma Wertheim, Mrs. Eugene Meyer, Jr., Herbert Seligmann, Paul Strand, Hunt Henderson.

MARSDEN HARTLEY

Hartley is the author of "Adventures in the Arts" and "Twenty-five Poems." His paintings may be seen at An American Place and the Frank K. M. Rehn Gallery.

Marsden Hartley's painting has never developed into the high levels his early work promised. Informed with taste, a certain daintiness and acceptable coloring, his work never flares with genius, but steadily maintains a decent level which should be expected of good painters.

Hartley hasn't exhibited any outstanding originality. His mountains and still lifes are the result of a vision that seems to me to follow fairly well-defined paths. It is the old story of an intelligent, sensitive painter who has the taste to understand what is good in the modern movement and use it in sound workmanlike fashion.

Hartley has the same tendency which pervaded the work of Ryder (whom he greatly admires)—never to build his compositions from the edges of the canvas. All emphasis is laid upon the central arrangement, and the edges are glossed over and left undeveloped. Though the focal point may be sharply realized, this incomplete construction definitely flaws the unity of the whole composition.

Hartley is best known as the "painter of mountains." He has been able to capture the solidity of the forms, the rhythm of their movements, the lonely grandeur of their solemn austerity.

In an article which Hartley wrote in "Creative Art," June, 1928, he gives a summary of his new thinking: "I have joined, once and for all, the ranks of the intellectual experimentalists. I can hardly bear the sound of the words 'expressionism,' 'emotionalism,' 'personality,' and such, because they imply the wish to express personal life, and I prefer to have no personal life. Personal art is for me a matter of spiritual indelicacy.

". . . I am interested only in the problem of painting, of how to make a better painting according to certain laws that are inherent in the making of a good picture—and not at all in private extraversions or introversions of specific individuals . . . I have come to the conclusion that it is better to have two colors in right relation to each other than to have a vast confusion of emotional exuber-

ance in the guise of ecstatic fullness or poetical revelation—both of which qualities have, generally speaking, long since become second rate experience.

"I have lived the life of the imagination, but at too great an expense. I do not admire the irrationality of the imaginative life. I have, if I may say so, made the intellectual grade. I have made the complete return to nature, and nature is, as we all know, primarily an intellectual idea. I am satisfied that painting also is like nature, an intellectual idea, and that the laws of nature as presented through the eye—and the eye is the painter's first and last vehicle—are the means of transport to the real mode of thought: the only legitimate source of esthetic experience for the intelligent painter."

Hartley seems to share the scented, happily fading notion that has been so large a part of the American painter's equipment that "personal art is a matter of spiritual indelicacy." Placing two colors in right relation is a lovely task and I suppose worth while if the painter has nothing greater to do, but I cling rather tenaciously to the belief that honest personal experience is never "second-rate" —if it be that of a first-rate person.

Even when Hartley was living the "life of the imagination," spiritual indelicacy played no part in his painting. I am inclined to believe he would be a greater artist if it had. His imagination comprised a delightful, colorful use of the modern painting idiom—but I should never describe it as personal. The restraint, the obvious repressions, protruded too much. There is never a free giving. Always one feels the painter harassed, concealing, holding back. I don't see how these elements can aid painting. I'd rather see some buck-eye painting that delivers up a genuine emotion than mincing, dainty canvasses that are experienced through shopworn eyes.

The imaginative life is only irrational when the painter hasn't the comprehension or the high lyric ability to convince one of the truth and depth of his emotions. Imagination does not preclude the ability to translate one's thoughts upon canvas in ordered unity. If one's imagination be disordered and no attempt be made to give it some sequence, of course the resulting painting will be a "vast confusion of emotional exuberance." Rouault, Chirico, Picasso seem to me very little confused in their imagination.

Hartley has been too content, or too frightened, to paint anything but acceptable pictures. As I have stated above, they are good paintings, but their complete lack of any originality, their measured emotions and unfortunate elegance leave a decided want. A Hartley who could conceivably be spiritually indelicate would be highly welcome in America's painting ranks.

YASUO KUNIYOSHI

was born in Okayama, Japan, September 1, 1893. He came to America at the age of thirteen.

Kuniyoshi has devoted a great deal of his time to drawings and lithographs. In these media he retains his highly sensitized surfaces and delicacy of thought.

His work is represented in these collections: Chicago Art Institute, Metropolitan Museum, Brooklyn Museum, Newark Museum, Ferdinand Howald, Samuel A. Lewisohn, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Mrs. C. H. Russell, R. Sturgis Ingersoll, Gallery of Living Art, Mrs. Alma Wertheim, Mrs. Charles Liebman, Arthur Schwab, Mrs. Edna Bryner, M. R. Goldsmith, Elmer Rice, Miss C. Hartshorn, A. Mackay-Smith, Mrs. J. R. Force and Paul Rosenfeld. The Daniel Gallery exhibits his work.

He writes me: "Years back when I was a little boy in Japan, I saw my first oil paintings. They were large panoramic views, so real in the depiction of nature that they made a deep impression on my mind. I thought about them a great deal.

"Years passed. I saw no more oil paintings and forgot about them. Then I came to America in 1906. In 1907 I went to art school.

"Through all these years I still feel as I did when, as a little boy, I looked at the huge paintings and experienced so strange a sensation. I have wished to express the thought of the East, my race, using the tradition of expressing the inner thoughts through the full realization of the matter of my experience.

"My art instructors were Frances Jones, Homer Boss, Maynard and Kenneth Hayes Miller. My preferences among artists have been: Seshu, Korin, Chinese sculptures, Courbet, Signorelli, Daumier and Delacroix. I have travelled in England, Spain, Italy and France, being particularly impressed by French architecture and the early Italian brick buildings."

YASUO KUNIYOSHI

With a sensitivity that is delicate, cheerful, animated and colorful, Kuniyoshi has brought a subtle civility all his own to American painting.

There is a gayety in his moods, an exuberant love for paint in his canvasses that is compellingly personal. Though we find in his work the shadow of refinement that has feminized so much of American art, it is a natural refinement, essentially Japanese, the expression of a genuinely poetic taste. It is most evidenced in his use of color, in the variations of that handsome, fecund brown that distinguishes all his work.

Kuniyoshi has gone through that period when he was wildly distorting his cows into queer triangular shapes and equipping children with inflated bulbous heads. Rigidly searching for form, he has ploughed through the early evidences of mere pleasant romanticism and is developing a sound classical technique that will make his contribution even more important than it now is.

His painting is not dominated by reason, but rather by a sensual sensibility, never startling and never inventing those technical difficulties that our modernists so delight in—that they may solve so ingeniously. Kuniyoshi's is a workable technique utilized simply to express a comfortable world.

His latest compositions show a larger ambition, a more deliberate concern with esthetic problems. "Bouquet and Stove," because of this heightened technical consciousness, seems to me his fullest accomplishment. Though it lacks some of his former freshness it has a completer pictorial realization. However, in the "Nude" which I have reproduced, this new care for form has destroyed his old love for a portrait, and, instead of the figure being worked from within, we get a sense of mere foreground anatomy.

Kuniyoshi's landscapes are appealing in spite of their sentimental touch, for his is a lush nature which calls forth fertile, gracious variations from his rich palette.

I find Kuniyoshi's work highly refreshing in its healthy freedom from jaded sophistication, and in the superbly human qualities he has brought to a modernism that has departed too far from these values.

JOHN MARIN

was born in Rutherford, N. J., 1870. He went through grammar and high schools. After four years in architects' offices, he began to study art at the Philadelphia Academy; then the Art Students' League in New York; then four years abroad. His first exhibit was in 1910 at "291." Since, he has also exhibited at the Daniel Gallery and the Montross Gallery, and now may be seen at An American Place.

Marin is represented in the following museums: Metropolitan Museum, Brooklyn Museum, San Francisco Museum, Chicago Art Institute, Fogg Art Museum, Gallery of Living Art, Wadsworth Atheneum and Morgan Memorial; and in the following collections: Phillips Memorial Gallery, Philip L. Goodwin, Adolph Lewisohn, Samuel A. Lewisohn, Mrs. Eugene Meyer, Jr., Paul Haviland, Mrs. Alma Wertheim, William Haviland, Mrs. Edward A. Norman, Mrs. Gertrude Hochschild, Ferdinand Howald, Charles Demuth, E. Weyhe, Paul Rosenfeld, Paul Strand, A. Schwab, Mrs. Winthrop Palmer, Georgia O'Keeffe, Alfred Stieglitz, Herbert J. Seligmann, Leo Stein, A. Rothbart, Mrs. J. Montgomery Sears, Hunt Henderson.

I have written much about our modern disillusion. Here, in Marin, more than in any other American, there is affirmation. In him is a positive force, not the continual negations of our world-weary intellectuals.

John Marin has the swelling, laconic power of one who knows himself, of one who is continuously discovering new things about himself, of one who has the joy and confidence of his statements. He is direct; nothing ever comes between him and his vision. Where other men are deflected by petty irrelevancies Marin sees straight, paints straight. This is so because Marin probably has the most highly developed painting sensibility in America.

In that way alone he is akin to Matisse, for Matisse also has the fluid sensibility to know the right thing to do, the exact color, the inevitable design. It is good

that Marin has this, for his medium dictates sureness—it exacts a heavy penalty from that painter who has no direction. Quick decisions are demanded by water color, sure decisions, and Marin excels in it because there is no hiatus between the seeing and the realization upon paper. Brain and emotion seem to react simultaneously, and upon the paper appears another of those breath-taking, sudden exposures of the spirit. His is our purest marriage of the brain with the heart.

Three subjects hold the greatest fascination for Marin: New York's skyscrapers, boats, and the scenes around his favorite islands in Maine. He portrays them in all seasons. Sometimes winter, cold, fierce, unrelenting, sweeps across his paper; then spring with its new life, its warmth, bringing new swirls of freshly washed emotion. But above all, truth is in his swift seeing, a subtle, exciting communion with his boats and water and hills. Somehow there seems to have been no orientation. They are as one. They are Marin's boats and hills and water, these stark, vibrant creations that observe no discretion and blurt out their inward design. Ruggedness is his reward, and a complete absence of the snivelling emasculation that corrodes American pictures.

Marin is joyous, exhaustless. His painting at sixty has more youth than that of any young man of thirty, for his eye never becomes weary. His water colors are the natural expression of a man whose passion and surge come from his own living, an undesiccated spirit delighting, exuberant in the play of life.

The man possesses as great a fountain of fecundity as those very waterfalls that go brilliantly cascading through his works. As they, he seems to renew himself. The surge of the sea, the calm of a tree, the tenseness of a skyscraper, the dignity of a boat, each year is reborn for us in those stormy, yet marvellously composed poems which Marin so carelessly seems to have entrusted to paper.

But there is nothing careless in a Marin composition. Note the rightness of those great white spaces, the inevitability of those colors so joyously brushed on, and the sequence of those wisps of browns, blues, greens and greys as they are hurled upon the paper. There is a bare economy in his use of forms, so much so at times that people have called them abstractions. Always there is a sure control of his surface organization.

It is good to have a Marin. The scorching quality of his work is deepened by the man's sincerity. Here, in Marin, is the radiance, the maturity, the peace of a fine poetic vision, of one rooted in the American soil. He has gone through the

hysterical sprinting and brashness of pioneer America and brought to it the vision of its vast power harnessed, with greater resources, more reserve, more direction. He is not fingering "Modernism," that unbiting, impersonalized mimicry of others' ideas. His technical problems are casual, dictated completely, imperiously, by what he has to say. And what he is saying is going a long way to interpret both a man and his country. Marin has proved that America need not be only a grave for European painting ideas.

The music that is Marin's: sometimes wild and nervous, sometimes mystical, sometimes laughing and gay, but always music. He strikes the most vibrant chords within us, because his music, like Bach's, is both austere and human.

Those Americans who, in their eagerness to canonize a "best" have usually made eagles of canaries, should go on pilgrimage to the water colors of Marin, for here is the American eagle, and here, more than in any other present-day painter, is the happy combination of the artist and the American.

GEORGIA O'KEEFFE

was born in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, on November 15, 1887, of Irish-Hungarian parentage. She began to draw at the age of ten. At seventeen she spent a year under John Vanderpoel at the Chicago Art Institute; the next year at the Art Students' League in New York, studying under Chase, Mora and Cox. Then a pause, until 1912–1914 when she attended the classes of Alon Bement at the University of Virginia. From 1914 to 1916 she studied under Bement and Prof. Arthur Dow at Teachers' College in New York. Then she taught art in Texas schools. She has exhibited since 1916. Her work may be seen at An American Place.

O'Keeffe is represented in the following collections: Brooklyn Museum, Barnes Foundation, Phillips Memorial Gallery, Mitchell Kennerly, Mrs. Alma Wertheim, Mrs. Winthrop Palmer, Samuel A. Lewisohn, Leonard C. Hanna, Mrs. Charles J. Liebman, J. F. Dewald, A. Rothbart, A. Schwab, Paul Rosenfeld, J. Strand, Paul Strand, Mrs. Edward A. Norman, Prof. Paul Sachs, Charles Demuth, Dr. Lorber, Hunt Henderson, Herbert J. Seligmann, Mrs. H. Fleischbaker, Alfred Stieglitz, Mrs. L. H. Schubert, Dr. L. Stieglitz and G. H. Engelhard.

It is interesting to consider that in America where our male artists are so highly feminized in their refinement we have no prominent woman artist other than O'Keeffe.* And O'Keeffe, who first was painting in as purely feminine a manner as Marie Laurencin, has of late been ripening her painting in a fashion that betokens her own new appreciation of an art that goes beyond wilfulness; that she also has found the clue to a new order and restraint.

Her early work, the calla lilies and scenes of New York, exhibited a delicate sensitivity to color—color that was warm, lovely, instinctive and personal, largely in quiet, smooth tones.

* ELSIE DRIGGS IS RAPIDLY COMING AHEAD, AND WILL UNDOUBTEDLY DEVELOP INTO AN INTERESTING PAINTER.

Much of her earlier work showed a womanly preoccupation with sex, an uneasy selection of phallic symbols in her flowers, a delight in their nascent qualities. O'Keeffe was being a woman and only secondarily an artist. Assertion of sex can only impede the talents of an artist, for it is an act of defiance, of grievance, in which the consciousness of these qualities retards the natural assertions of the painter.

O'Keeffe the woman, with her psychic paintings, was an engaging sight in the American scene. Her work created large comment—but it was extra-pictorial; it wasn't primarily her painting, but her subjects that aroused us. Every one was interested in seeing feminine thoughts, feelings, emotions. These influences effectively barred any comment upon her painting. These moods pass, and sooner or later we come to judge them as art, whereupon we find them unsound and impermanent. As a record of a phase of womanhood, of highly personal womanhood, they may be good propaganda but there they end.

Her later work shows less self-consciousness, for her intelligence has come to the fore. Her pictures are better built, more knowing, luminous with a greater clarity of understanding. They are still personal, in that only O'Keeffe could have visualized them, but they have the ring of deeper, less defiant truth.

Some of these later pictures have departed from her early pastel colors and have developed into raw, brutal splashes. O'Keeffe has made entire compositions of them—the new expression of her seeing. They are as yet unsure, too harshly divisible, never molded into a firm entity. But with them she should obtain a new synthesis, for now more than ever she is practicing the basic laws of organization, and formal order is getting the upper hand over unchained exuberance.

Sometimes, as in her latest religious pictures, she attains a fuller human quality. Life is in them, strong and pulsating. Vibrant black crosses beat at one from the canvasses, assertive, boldly crying their new faith. Well, let it be religion that O'Keeffe has, but though it may become sentimental it at present is also a new intellectual experience in that she has found the ability to clothe her ideas and experiences in thoughtful language. Incomplete, as yet, but the forerunner of a newer development, one that should bring her art to greater maturity. She is growing in force and penetration, becoming more aware of the peculiar laws of a picture, and so, inevitably on the way to becoming a better painter—when her talents as a woman will help and not hinder her progress.

CHARLES SHEELER

was born in Philadelphia, July, 1883, of American parentage, with a background of Irish and Welsh antecedents.

He studied applied design at the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art in Philadelphia and after completing a three year course entered the school of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Here he studied painting and drawing with William M. Chase. During the three years spent at this school two trips were made abroad with Chase to study the galleries of London, Madrid and Paris. These two trips were further augmented in 1909 by a trip to Italy, which terminated in Paris.

It was then that an acquaintance was made with the work of Picasso, Matisse, Bracque and others representing the new tendencies and a somewhat better insight was gained of the intentions of Cézanne.

This trip was the introduction to a period of revaluation covering about three years, and an ultimate change in direction. Some of the pictures made during this period which gave some evidence of the changes taking place were invited by Arthur B. Davies to the Armory Exhibition in 1913.

Following the Armory show he was represented in a small group of Mr. Davies' selection which exhibited annually for two or possibly three years at the Montross Gallery. By this time there was at least sufficient curiosity in some of the cities of the middle west to warrant invitations for shows of various group combinations. These invitations finally extended to London, Berlin and Paris.

Sheeler's preferences among the artists cover a wide range from the so-called primitives of France and Germany to Greco, Jan Van Eyck, Holbein, Ingres and Cézanne.

He is represented in the Art Institute of Chicago, Cleveland Museum, Phillips Memorial Gallery, Gallery of Living Art. In private collections among others: Ferdinand Howald, Earl Horter, Mrs. J. R. Force and Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney. His work may be seen at the Daniel Gallery.

CHARLES SHEELER

Charles Sheeler is one of the most sensitively intelligent of our American painters. It is inevitable that introspection should have led him to harbor the grave doubts about a personal fulfilment which have beset so many of our thinking men.

The exasperation engendered by this human restlessness has, in Sheeler's case, forced him to a literal realism in painting in the belief that here is something which he can grasp, an actuality by means of which he can make terms with humanity.

This new realism of the past two years exhibits itself in a studied reproduction of the subject which Sheeler has chosen to portray. He avoids all distortion and, by a literal combination of the forms he uses, achieves a camera-like synthesis. Always there is a deep searching for a consistent formal harmony, a genuine feeling for line, mass and balanced spatial volumes.

Sheeler's new striving is a result, it seems to me, of his long practice in photography (since 1912). This realism he seeks is too often tempered by the cameraman's care for detail, for qualities of light and shadow, for an eager exactness. This influence is bothersome for we hark back to the fact that sheer reporting brought about the degeneration of most of our later nineteenth century artists when their fidelity to externalities led them to vie with the camera in a search for exact reproduction. In their factual presentations these painters gleaned none of the personal implications that existed within the objects they portrayed.

I do not say that Sheeler has lost his old sense of measure and balanced beauty. These qualities he never will iron out of his pictures, but I do believe that his new realism is too often bringing him to the edge of a bloodless and attenuated subterfuge for humanity.

The realism of Jan Van Eyck has interested this new side of Sheeler, and he holds it up as an example of his own present viewpoint. But Van Eyck was the product of an entirely different civilization. Whereas Sheeler's realism is the result of escape, Van Eyck's is the natural consequence of an earthly and robust nature possessing an inordinate delight in everyday humanity. Facts to the Flemish men of Van Eyck's period were paramount because that was their sole currency; being live and eager participants in an actual reality, that was what they chose to portray.

A peculiar primness and bridled quality has taken possession of Sheeler's

work. Never impetuous, he has drained all drama and keyed his color so low as to make for understatement. So guarded and deliberate has he become that he seems to me to be effectively smothering all primary emotions. He has become too coldly scientific and has abandoned that personal identification which so definitely marked his earlier work.

Consider the warmth of the barn and yachts compositions, reproduced on plates 46 and 47. Here we have the best side of Sheeler, an undefiant concern with his personal experiences. There is something gem-like in this beautiful recapturing of a felt emotion. Here also he has used the mint of technique but it is fashioned as an exquisite cloak for a private vision. His perceptive personality is allowed freer scope, unhampered by too strong a fidelity to a literal realism.

Sheeler's art, of course, is always the result of intellectualism. Plastic laws are an open book to him, but he has never stooped to borrow others' ideas. His plastic inventions are able companions for his own serene and sensitive inspirations. Never does the machinery protrude. And never, even in his later work, is there the slightest evidence of extra-pictorial considerations. There is a complete absence of literature or any anecdotal incidents.

The supreme qualities of his art are a detached elegance in thought, an urbane and civilized taste, an absolute control of his medium, and a genuine preoccupation with his own personal development.

As I have indicated, I believe his present resort to literal realism is a blind alley—from which I think he will emerge with a surer understanding of the inward reality which dictated the creation of so much of his earlier work.

MAURICE STERNE

was born at Tiban on the Baltic, July 13, 1878. His parents were Gregor Sterne and Naomi Schlossberg, Russian subjects. He came to America in 1888, at the age of ten. Studied at the National Academy of Design under Edgar M. Ward and George W. Maynard. Before studying art he worked in a flag factory, a bronze foundry, at map engraving and at bar tending. He has travelled extensively in France, Italy, Greece and the Island of Bali, where he worked for two years.

Antonia Pollainolo had great influence upon his drawing, Piero della Francesca upon his outlook and composition, Jacopo della Quercia and the 5th Century B.C. Greek sculpture upon his sculpture.

Sterne is represented in the following collections: Metropolitan Museum, Brooklyn Museum, Carnegie Institute, Phillips Memorial Gallery, Detroit Museum, Boston Museum, Cleveland Museum, Providence Museum, Worcester Museum, Kupferstich Kabinett (Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin, Germany), Cologne (Germany) Museum, Ulm (Germany) Museum, Tate Gallery (London, England), Carl Hamilton and Samuel A. Lewisohn. He has been requested by the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, Italy, to paint a self-portrait for its permanent collection. His work is exhibited at the Reinhardt Gallery.

He writes me that he has "no particular credo or ideas about painting. For me there is one test only in judging a painting: 'Is it good painting?' Naturally, I have thought a great deal about it and at different times had different theories. But I have now come to the conclusion that the ultimate and really valid test is to judge a painting in the language of painting. Words explain to a very limited extent, often bewilder and sometimes mislead."

Sterne's interest in painting follows his idea of confining himself to the language of painting. It is not an original language, being couched exclusively in the style

of the old masters, for Sterne has leaned heavily upon Eclecticism for his compositions and color values. He is probably one of the most learned of all our American painters in the history of art.

This museum attitude has led to a certain coldness in his painting, a deliberation and studied viewpoint that robs it of spontaneity and freshness. His learning has provided an undoubted facility, but his very cleverness in painting has at times carried him into glibness. He has great technical gifts, particularly in his modelling, which, I suppose, is a direct result of his sculptural practice. His drawing is always precise and correct. Mathematics in painting interest him little, and he continues occupied with man, leaving the cubes and cones to others.

He is the leading example in America of those artists who seek no new technical discoveries and base their artistic thinking upon the lessons of the old masters.

MAX WEBER

was born in Bialystok, Russia, in 1881. He studied with Arthur W. Dow in America, with Laurens and Matisse in Paris.

He writes me: "I travelled in Spain and Italy. The Italian Primitives left a strong and lasting impression upon me, particularly Giotto, Francesca, Massaccio; also Giorgione and Titian.

"In Spain I was strongly impressed by Greco and Goya.

"In France, Cézanne, above all other masters, did more to shape my life as a painter, although I profited greatly by my study and appreciation of Courbet and Manet. My interest in the work of the 'Fauves' helped me greatly to pursue my own path."

He is represented in the following museums and collections: Newark Museum, Phillips Memorial Gallery, New York University, Gallery of Living Art, Preston Harrison Collection in the Los Angeles Museum, Mrs. Nathan J. Miller, Dr. F. H. Hirschland, Julius Oppenheimer, Dr. B. D. Saklatwalla, J. B. Neumann, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Samuel A. Lewisohn, Alfred Stieglitz, Albert Rothbart, Albert Gleizes in Paris and Alvin Langdon Coburn in London. He is the author of "Cubist Poems" and "Essays on Art."

He exhibits at the Downtown Gallery and the J. B. Neumann Gallery.

The course of modern painting has been none too smooth in America, and its practitioners have labored under not only a vast financial handicap—because of the public's unwillingness to purchase modern pictures at first—but also a great deal of ridicule, misunderstanding and ignorant criticism from critic and spectator alike. Max Weber, one of the first in America to paint in the modern manner, was subject to both these hardships.

His work was well known to me from the examples I had seen in private collections, in galleries and in his own fine studio in Great Neck. But I had never seen a complete showing of all his periods until the retrospective exhibit

given him by the Museum of Modern Art in March, 1930. All his most important works were assembled, and it was with the keenest anticipation that I went to see what this artist had accomplished.

As one entered the large gallery a roving glance around the walls was rewarded with a pleasing flow of color—mellow and tasty. And then one stopped before individual pictures, digesting what the artist had to say. The review of his different periods showed emphatically that Cézanne, Negro sculpture, Greco, Picasso, Matisse, Persian and Chinese art held no plastic secrets from him; that these and many other influences went into the formation of his pictorial ideas. Weber's clear intelligence was easily able to master what there was to learn from every source with which he came in contact.

Yet instead of the individuality of one man shining from those walls, my impression, confirmed by many visits, was that here was a summary of painting fashions, mercurial, chameleon-like. Each of the periods represented the salient characteristics of some dominant style or man who was in the saddle of painting favor at the time. This painting was unshocking, easy to digest, because these various art formulas were only too well known in the work of others.

Weber was fashionable; he knew his times and what they had brought forth. That he did not shun them, but took their inventions and discoveries as his own does not mark him out for approbation. The criterion is: what did he accomplish with the materials he had. And what if he had been under the influence of the now unfashionable Watteau or Delacroix? In other words, what peculiar merit lay in the fact that Weber was "modern"?

Many painters have raided the art cultures of the world and capitalized the best thoughts of their own day only to continue eclectic, the mirror of others' ideas. A painter is just as derivative if he adds nothing to the lessons learned from Rembrandt or El Greco as he is in not going on from those he discovered yesterday in Cézanne or Picasso. If his perceptions and attitudes are borrowed, if his own experience is unenlarged, that painter has little to contribute to painting.

Weber is essentially a student, carrying on others' researches and tentative discoveries. Sometimes he rises above his assimilations and by sheer racial emotionalism sweeps his painting into the realm of personal expression; his colors attain decided values and his forms become taut and above reminiscence.

But usually he is only playing with stale ideas. His landscapes follow nature in the same realistic, factual presentation that characterized Courbet's work.

Weber brought to them no personal perception or inventive plasticism. As in his still life he relied too greatly upon his color palette, upon his pleasing reds, blues and greens to give what life there was to the painting. That, I am quite sure, would never satisfy an original artist. Merely painting pictures in old molds is both indolent and insensitive.

Weber made various experimental essays in Cubism, but without any real success, perhaps because Cubism, with its hard construction, its search for structural verities, was essentially foreign to him. His paintings during this period were overshadowed by a heavy romanticism which never became lyrical. He attempted to catch a fleeting impression and break it up in planes flat and angular. But despite this patent geometry the core of the pictures remained essentially soft, their central arrangement containing some facile emotive grouping that exhibited the artist's native discord with his striving for architecture. The pictures are incredible because of their own inner warfare.

Elie Faure, in an essay on Derain, wrote: "A great painter has not the right to turn back to tradition before he has trodden the paths of revolt which lead him to the realization of his own artistic personality. Those who yield at once to the dictates of tradition have no real interest in themselves. They only appreciate the superficially apparent qualities of tradition and, consequently, travesty it."

I feel that Weber from the day he took a brush in hand was a traditionalist, that he never gave himself a chance to develop along personal lines. This has, inevitably, stunted his very great gifts. Possessed of as sure a color sense as almost any living painter he has become too reliant upon it. There is no searching of his own ideas, only a contentment with those of others.

It is in his religious paintings alone that Weber becomes the fine artist, the individual. He is an expert in the mysteries of faith; his rabbis and brooding women have the curious melancholy significance, the almost fanatical appearance that is inherent in the ecstatic worshipper. In these works we feel the imaginative stirring of his intelligence, a delicate sensitivity, a statement of faith, of exaltation, that is rare in this time. His views become more his own and his construction assumes a more original aspect, one of greater individual perception.

In these assertions of faith Weber has reached his highest plastic values. The technique, no longer rotted by borrowed ideas, fits his new concepts, adapts itself to the statements made. He becomes the architectural romantic, emotional, colorful, drenched in feeling.

MAX WEBER

In these religious paintings Weber goes beyond mere subject matter. Their spiritual essence, their devotion, portray for us something of the artist's own communion, of his Slavic and Jewish heritage.

Strange, in this America of hard business, materialism, and lean emotions, to find an artist with so intense a religion. In El Greco, whose plasticism is robustly adopted by Weber, we find a similar lyricism. I have seen people stand before these pictures of Weber's embarrassed, uneasy, as before a world hitherto hidden, and one that should be unrevealed.

These essentially Hebraic creations have had no outstanding commercial success in America. Buyers have felt safer with his landscape and still life. That is very sad, for here only, it seems to me, is the side of Weber that should have received our profoundest encouragement. Here only is his imagination allowed to throw off the freight of all those various cultures he knows so well. Here only we see the artist get away from his constant building on art and attain a certain self-revelation, wherein his work takes on real significance. Had he allowed himself more of this freedom I am sure Weber would have been a finer artist; he is always a good painter.

Weber's own writing derides the efforts of modern men to break with tradition. It is interesting to set down here some of his ideas.

"In recent years, art has been made into a science, and if not fully that, it has been dragged into metaphysical arenas. Some serious and inspired spirits have sought and are seeking to express the poetry of modern dynamics so full of marvel, peculiar to our age, but the most only mimic the dynamic and they would make us believe that this is the new art—this tendency toward the basest sort of realism and degeneracy.

"Science may advance as rapidly in the future as it has in the past, but physical science and metaphysics are not art and cannot do for art. A machine is not a sonnet or a picture, nor is a logical syllogism a prayer; and a mechanical draughtsman's drawing of the intersection of solids or of the development of the surfaces is not a thing esthetic. . . . No art can be built upon a foundation of vagaries, or of fads. Ideals ferment art. Emotion is as the sunlight to the seed of art, and the seed in time is fruit.

"Time adds more to tradition every new day. To try to be traditional today may be as erroneous as some of the modern efforts in art that run away from time itself. They are beyond the last or latest movement. They are before being.

MAX WEBER

In science it would be absurd to go back to the remote past. While in art the farther we go from the past the more scientific and self-conscious we become. Yet we know that we cannot express our modern emotions in the terms and means of the ancients. Indeed we must invent new means. But before inventing new means, how much and wherein have our emotions changed from those of the ancients? Scientifically the races have gone indescribably far ahead of the ancients, but spiritually and esthetically where are we?

"The spirit is more, even though it may not be expressed, than any means if such exist only as means, or as cold technique. A color must be more than a color. A form must be more than a form; it must suggest the sacred more only found in the spiritual. . . . The hunger of the human spirit cannot be satisfied with the means of 'art' only. Means and only means mean nothing. Only expression gives life and significance. . . . In the architectonic process of a work, the spirit of expression creates the means, in the intervals of the process of formation. . . . Art lies in spirituality, in nobleness, and in virile placid beauty and always upon such qualities it depends to evoke its means. The feeling or need for an intense color will choose an intense pigment, the feeling or necessity for the beauty of interlacing of areas will choose its essential geometric warmth or austerity.

". . . In the history of art we may find whole periods or epochs when spirit was bankrupt, and when leather was distributed for gold. In the history of mankind, the intensity of emotion and its expression varied accordingly as religious ardor, or scientific discovery, or economic principles rules the hour. This is certain, that great art reveals itself without loud verbal manifestoes. I have come to believe that these manifestoes are loud shouts that deafen, instead of being deep and silent and profound. This is new to art, but it is not new art. There is now an academy of manifesters and their manifestoes. It is labelled with scientific titles. We have had whole shiploads of Italian, French, Spanish and English flavors of art, hastily manufactured. But who can manufacture or ship real inspiration?"

IV

SEVEN MODERN AMERICANS

SEVEN MODERN AMERICANS

In addition to the painters whom I have discussed in individual chapters, the work of seven others is represented by photographs, seven who are doing yeoman service in the field of modern art. That the reader may have some salient facts about each of these artists I am including herewith brief biographical data and information as to where their work may be seen.

Bernard Karfiol was born near Budapest—of American parents, in 1886. He studied, and showed his work, both in Paris and New York. He is represented in the Newark Art Museum, Corcoran Art Gallery, Phillips Memorial Gallery and many private collections. The Downtown Gallery exhibits his work.

Walt Kuhn was born in New York in 1880 of German-Spanish parentage. He never attended art school, but diligently investigated what there was to be learned from museums in Italy, Holland and France. He has been a real estate man, a bar tender, a cartoonist, and director of stage plays, pantomimes and ballets he wrote himself. He exhibits at the Downtown Gallery and has work in the following collections: Miss L. P. Bliss, Brooklyn Museum, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Thomas Hitchcock, Jr., Arthur Brisbane, Phillips Memorial Gallery and others.

Niles Spencer was born in Pawtucket, R. I., May 6, 1893. He studied art at the Rhode Island School of Design, and later went to Italy and Paris. The Daniel Gallery gave him his first one-man show in 1925, and his later work may also be seen there. He is represented in the Newark Museum, Phillips Memorial Gallery, Ferdinand Howald and other private collections.

Benjamin Kopman was born on December 25, 1887, in Russia. He studied painting under Jones, Maynard and Ward at the National Academy of Design. His

work is exhibited at the galleries of E. Weyhe and J. B. Neumann, and is in the following collections: Brooklyn Museum, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Metropolitan Museum (etching), Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney, Alfred Stieglitz, Miss L. Knoedler, B. Reis and Sidney Janowitz.

Vincent Canadé was born in 1889 in San Giorgio Albanese, Province of Cosenza, Italy, where he attended technical school. He came to America in 1892. Except for a few months at William Chase's School, his art is entirely self-taught. He has exhibited at the Bourgeois Gallery. His first one-man show was given by the E. Weyhe Gallery in 1925, where his work may now be seen. The following collections have some of his important paintings: Phillips Memorial Gallery, Dr. R. Meyer Riefstahl, S. K. Nathan and Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney.

Morris Kantor was born in Russia on April 15, 1896. He came to America in 1909, and studied for a short time under Homer Boss at the Independent School of Art. At present his work is exhibited at the Frank K. M. Rehn Gallery, and is represented in the following collections: Phillips Memorial Gallery, Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney, A. Conger Goodyear, Alexander M. Bing, Gallery of Living Art and John S. Sheppard.

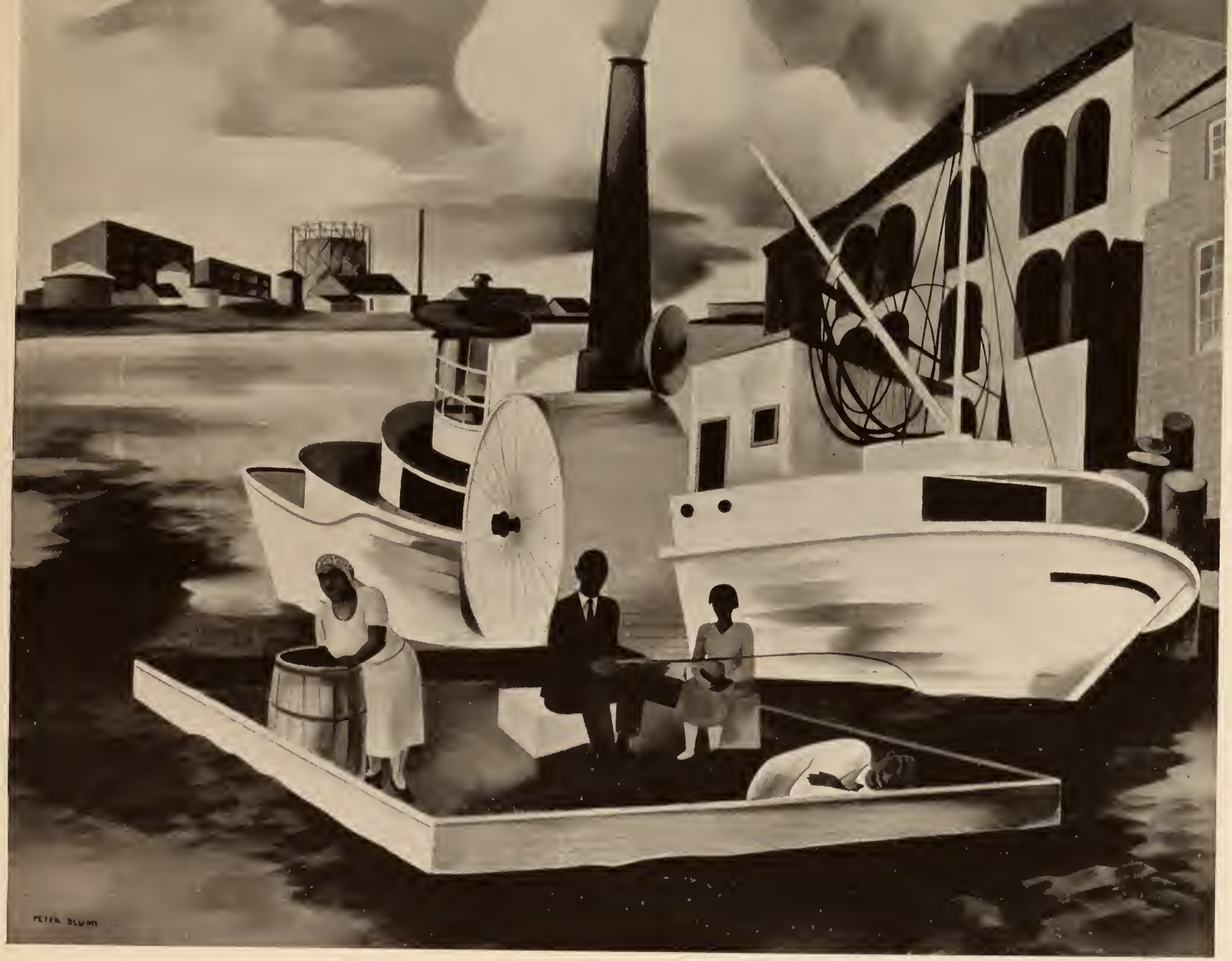
Elsie Driggs was born on August 5, 1898, in Hartford, Connecticut. She studied painting under Maurice Sterne at the Art Students' League and in Italy. The Daniel Gallery exhibits her work, important examples of which are in the following collections: Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney, Ferdinand Howald, John T. Spaulding and W. S. Ludington.

V

THE ILLUSTRATIONS

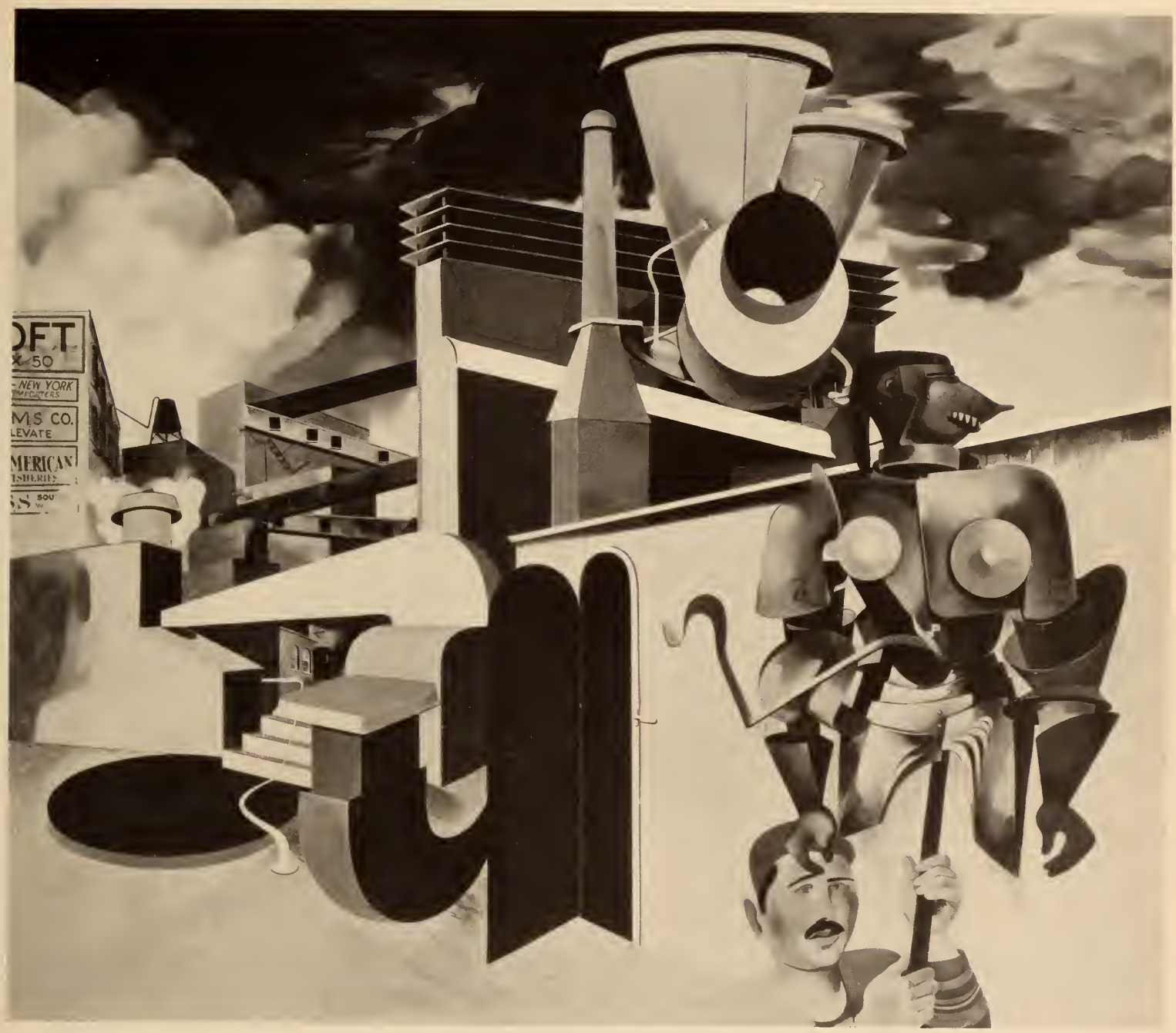
PETER BLUME

THE BRIDGE—1928
COLLECTION SIDNEY JANOWITZ



PETER BLUME

SHOW BOAT—1929
COLLECTION SAMUEL A. LEWISOHN

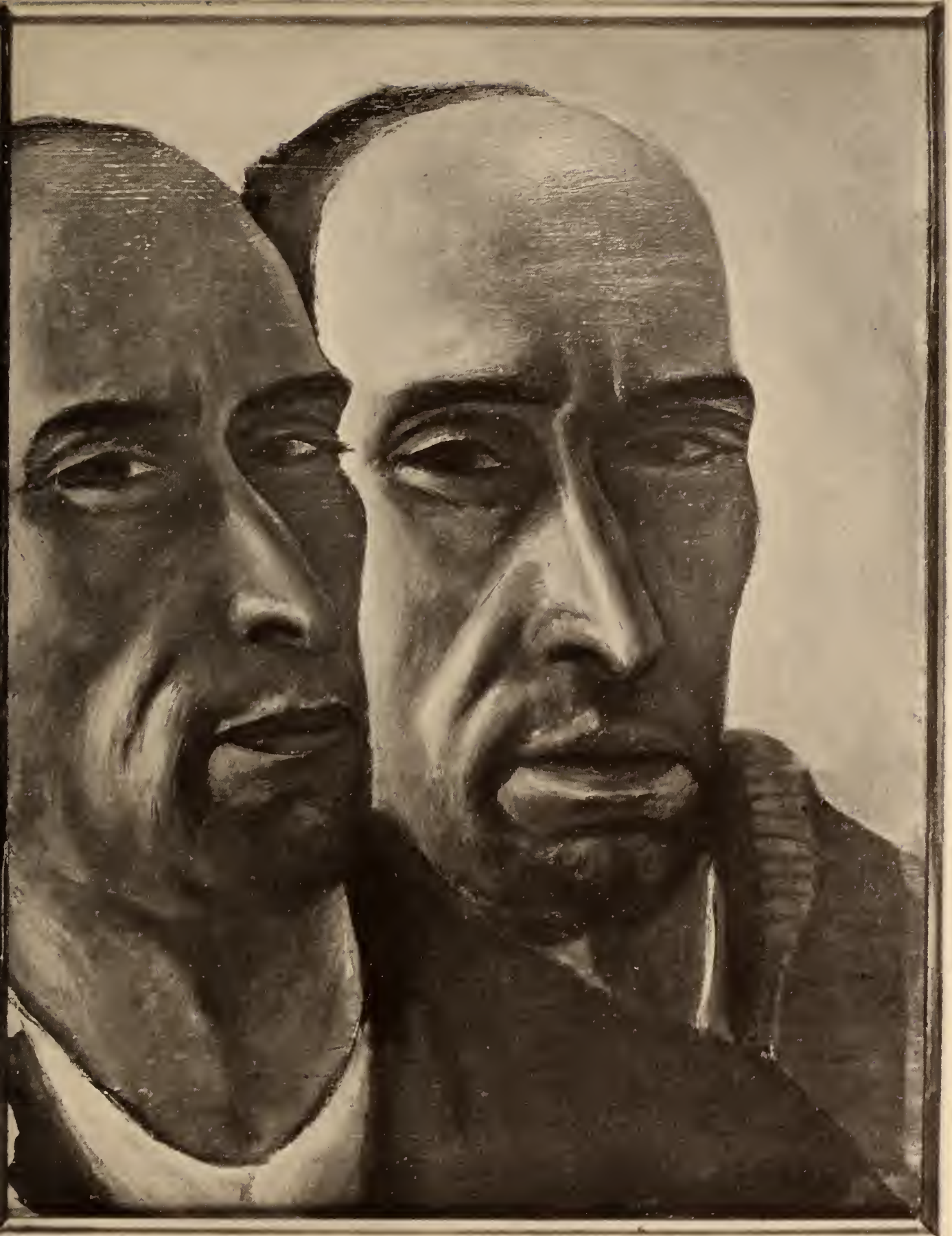


PETER BLUME

PARADE—1930
COLLECTION MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

PETER BLUME

THE WHITE FACTORY—1929
COLLECTION W. S. SCHWABACHER
4

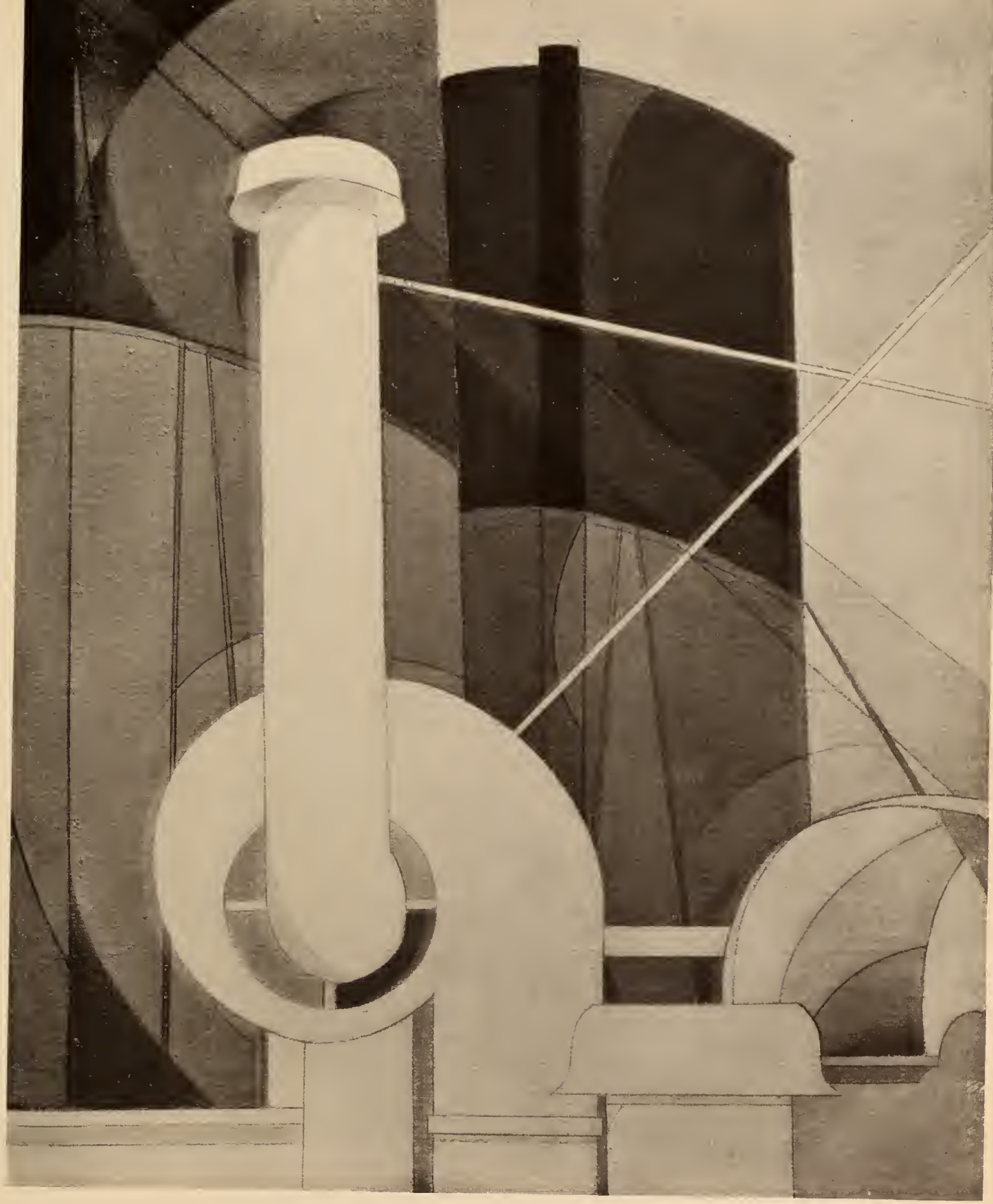


VINCENT CANADÉ

DOUBLE SELF PORTRAIT—1920
COLLECTION E. WEYHE

CHARLES DEMUTH

MODERN CONVENIENCES—1922
COLLECTION FERDINAND HOWALD
6



CHARLES DEMUTH

PAQUEBOT, PARIS—1927
COLLECTION FERDINAND HOWALD

HARLES DEMUTH

TER SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN—1920
LLECTION FERDINAND HOWALD

CHARLES DEMUTH

AFTER SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN—1920
COLLECTION FERDINAND HOWALD
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CHARLES DEMUTH

MY EGYPT—1927
COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST

CHARLES DEMUTH

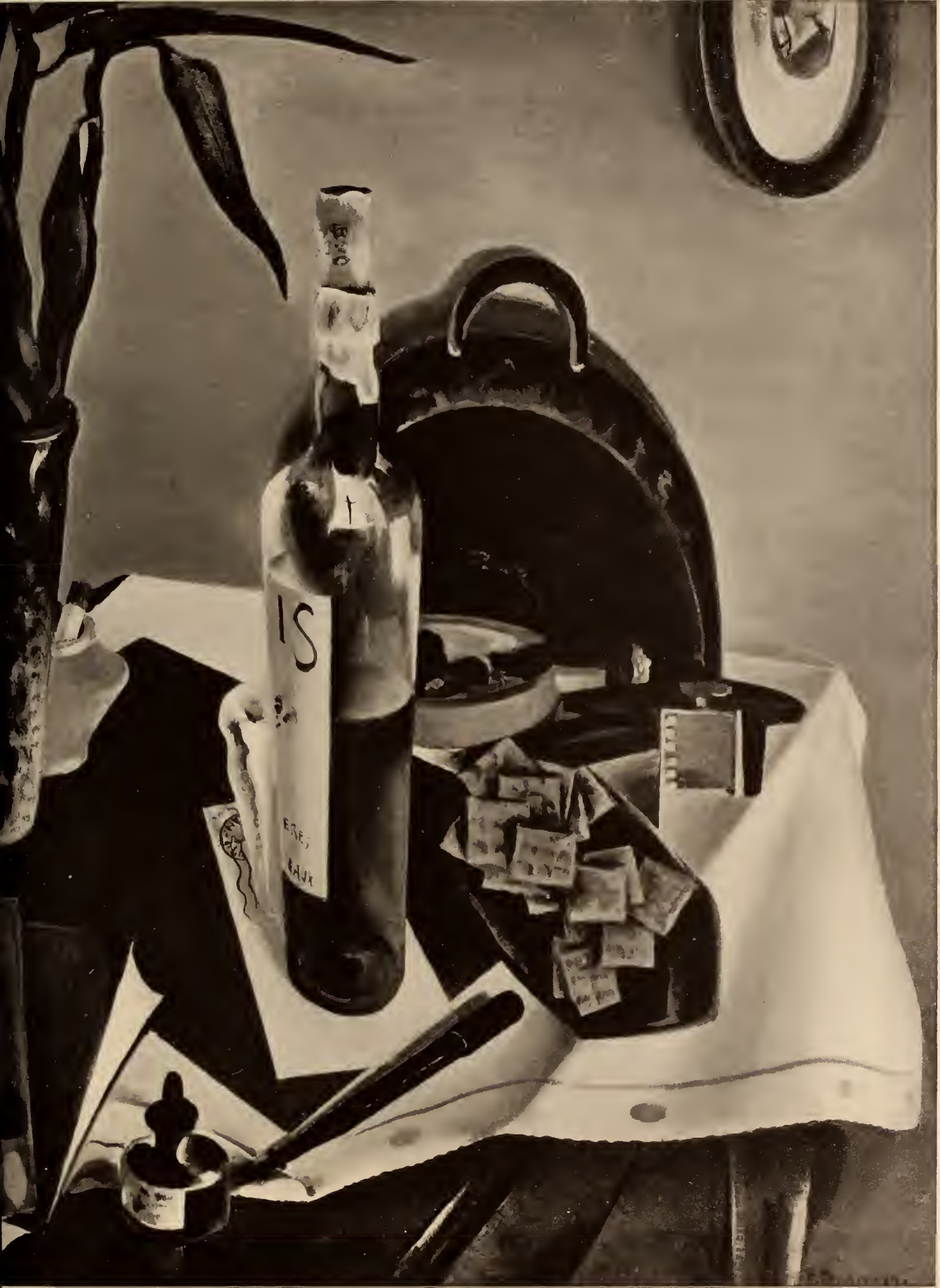
STILL LIFE—1928
COLLECTION AN AMERICAN PLACE

PRESTON DICKINSON

THE PROVOLONE CHEESE—1927
COLLECTION CHARLES B. HOYT

PRESTON DICKINSON

QUEBEC STREET—1928
COLLECTION STURGIS INGERSOLL
12



PRESTON DICKINSON

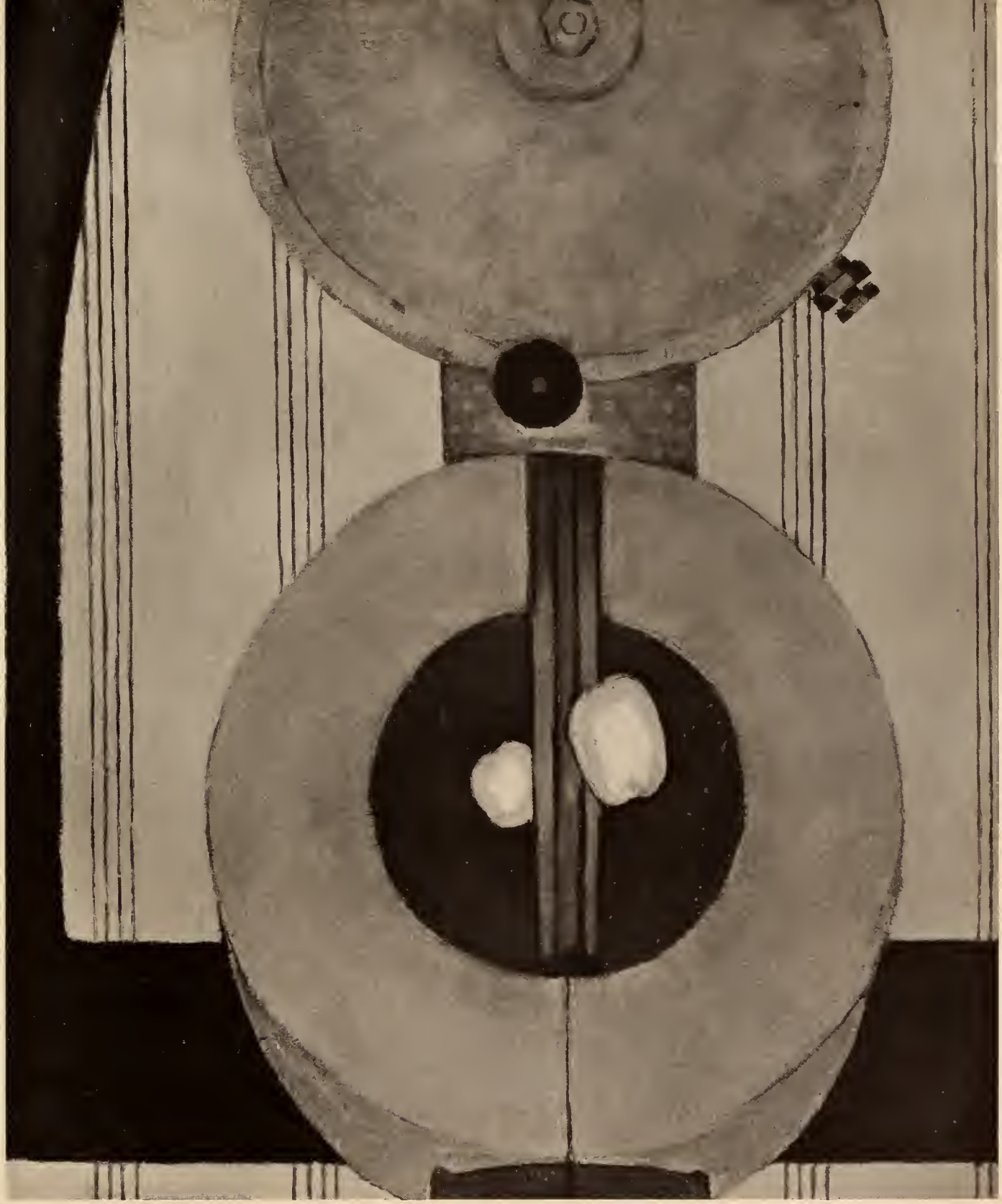
STILL LIFE WITH BOTTLE—1929
COLLECTION W. S. SCHWABACHER

PRESTON DICKINSON

OLD QUARTER, QUEBEC—1927
COLLECTION PHILLIPS MEMORIAL GALLERY
14

PRESTON DICKINSON

STILL LIFE WITH CHAIR—1928
COLLECTION FERDINAND HOWALD



ARTHUR G. DOVE

THE LANTERN—1921
COLLECTION ALFRED STIEGLITZ
16

ARTHUR G. DOVE

THE WAVE—1924
COLLECTION ALFRED STIEGLITZ

ARTHUR G. DOVE

RUNNING DOGS—1930
COLLECTION ALFRED STIEGLITZ

ARTHUR G. DOVE

DISTRACTION—1928
COLLECTION ALFRED STIEGLITZ

ARTHUR G. DOVE

SILVER STORM—1923
COLLECTION DR. SILVERBURG

ELSIE DRIGGS

PITTSBURGH—1928

COLLECTION MRS. HARRY PAYNE WHITNEY

MARSDEN HARTLEY

NEW MEXICO—1923
COLLECTION ALFRED STEIGLITZ
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MARSDEN HARTLEY

STILL LIFE—1924
COLLECTION AN AMERICAN PLACE
23

MARSDEN HARTLEY

NEW MEXICO—1925
COLLECTION ALFRED STIEGLITZ
24

MARSDEN HARTLEY

STILL LIFE
COLLECTION PAUL ROSENFELD
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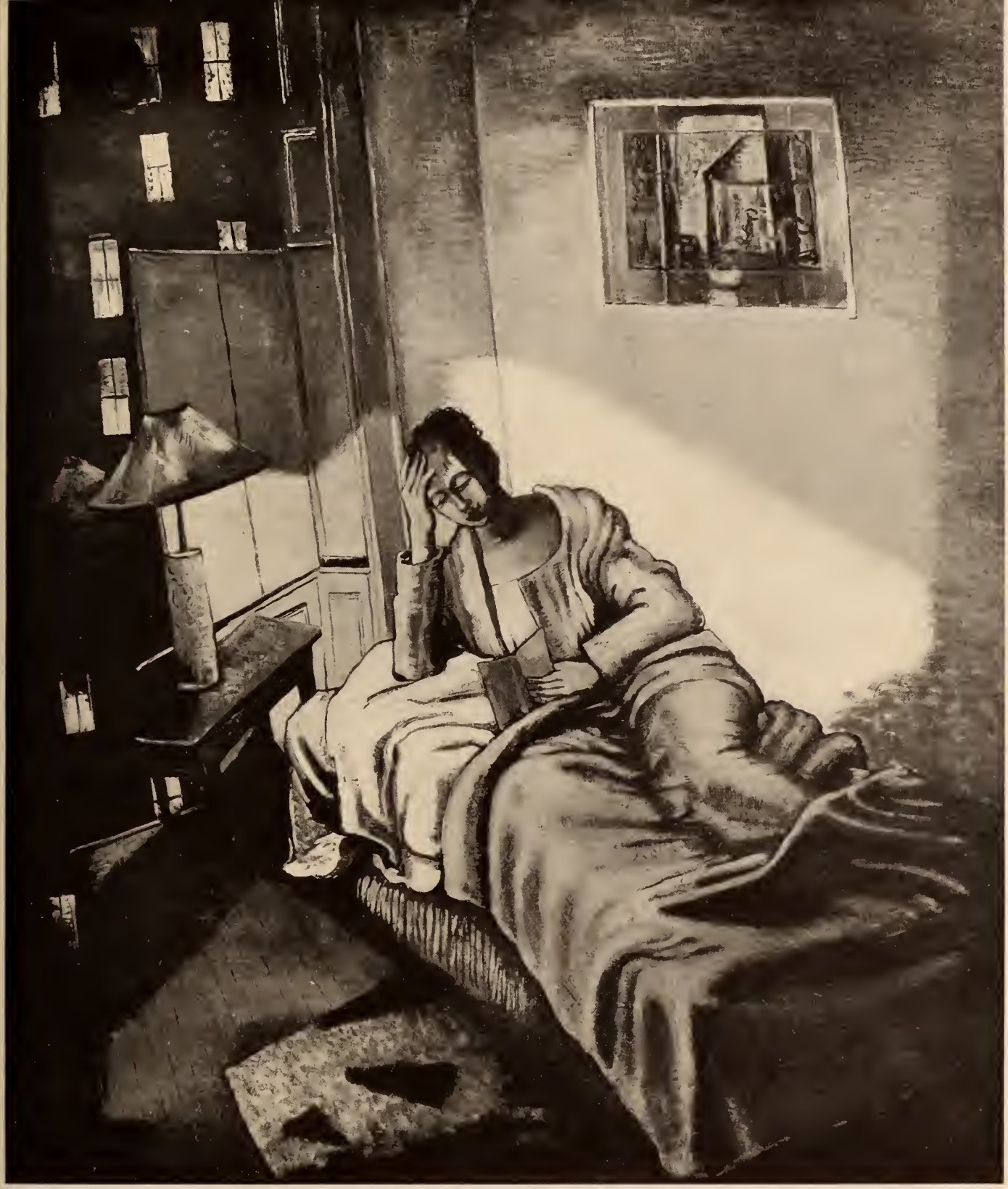
BERNARD KARFIOL

BOY—1922
COLLECTION PHILLIPS MEMORIAL GALLERY
26

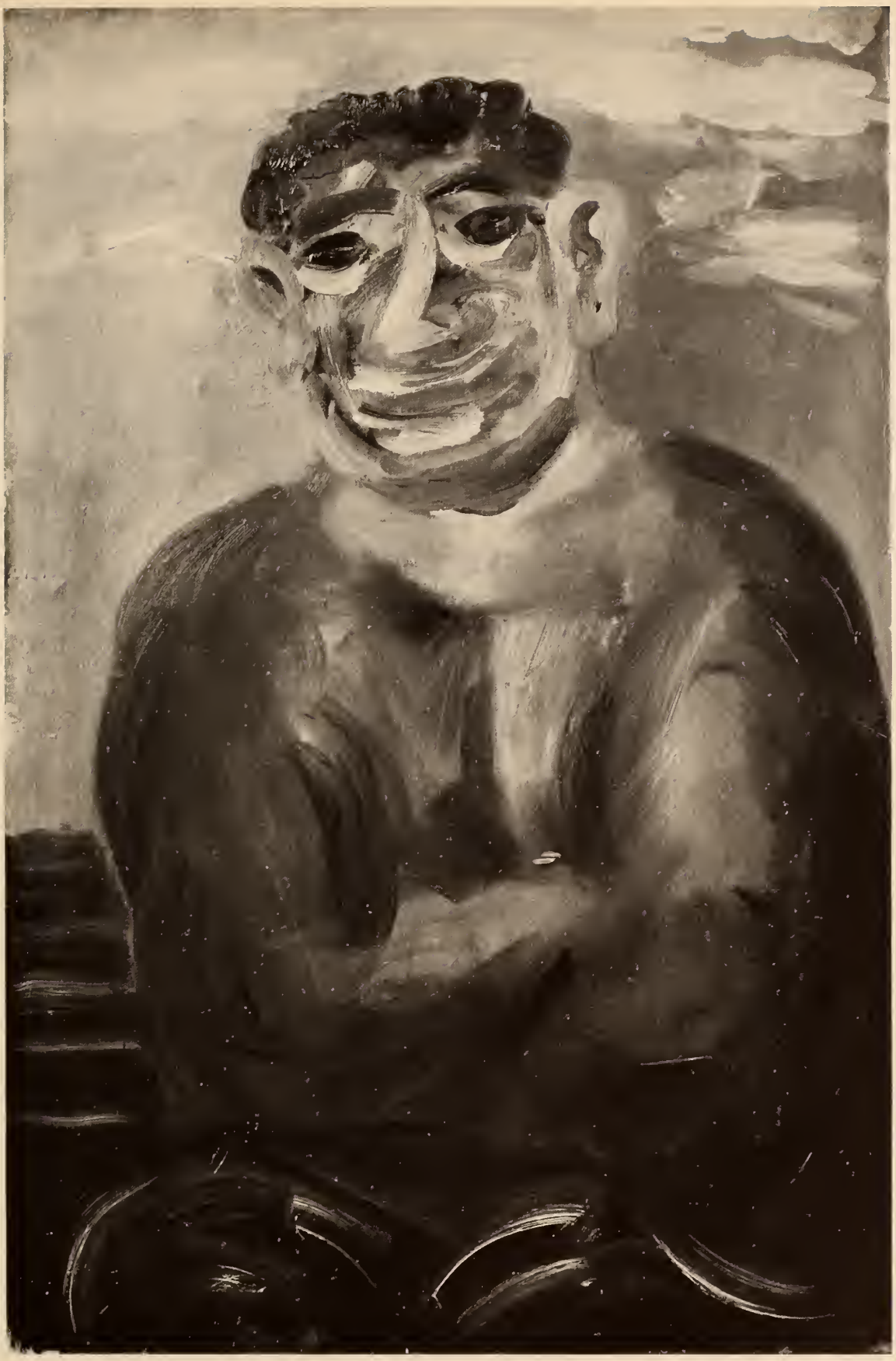
BERNARD KARFIOL

SEATED NUDE—1929
COLLECTION MUSEUM OF MODERN ART



MORRIS KANTOR

WOMAN READING—1930
COLLECTION DOWNTOWN GALLERY
28



BENJAMIN KOPMAN

THE SAILOR—1929
COLLECTION SIDNEY JANOWITZ
29

WALT KUHN

WOMAN WITH BLACK NECKLACE—1928

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WALT KUHN

THE WHITE CLOWN—1929

YASUO KUNIYOSHI

BOUQUET AND STOVE—1929
COLLECTION DANIEL GALLERY
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YASUO KUNIYOSHI

THE COCK—1924
COLLECTION FERDINAND HOWALD

YASUO KUNIYOSHI

NUDE—1930
COLLECTION DANIEL GALLERY
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YASUO KUNIYOSHI

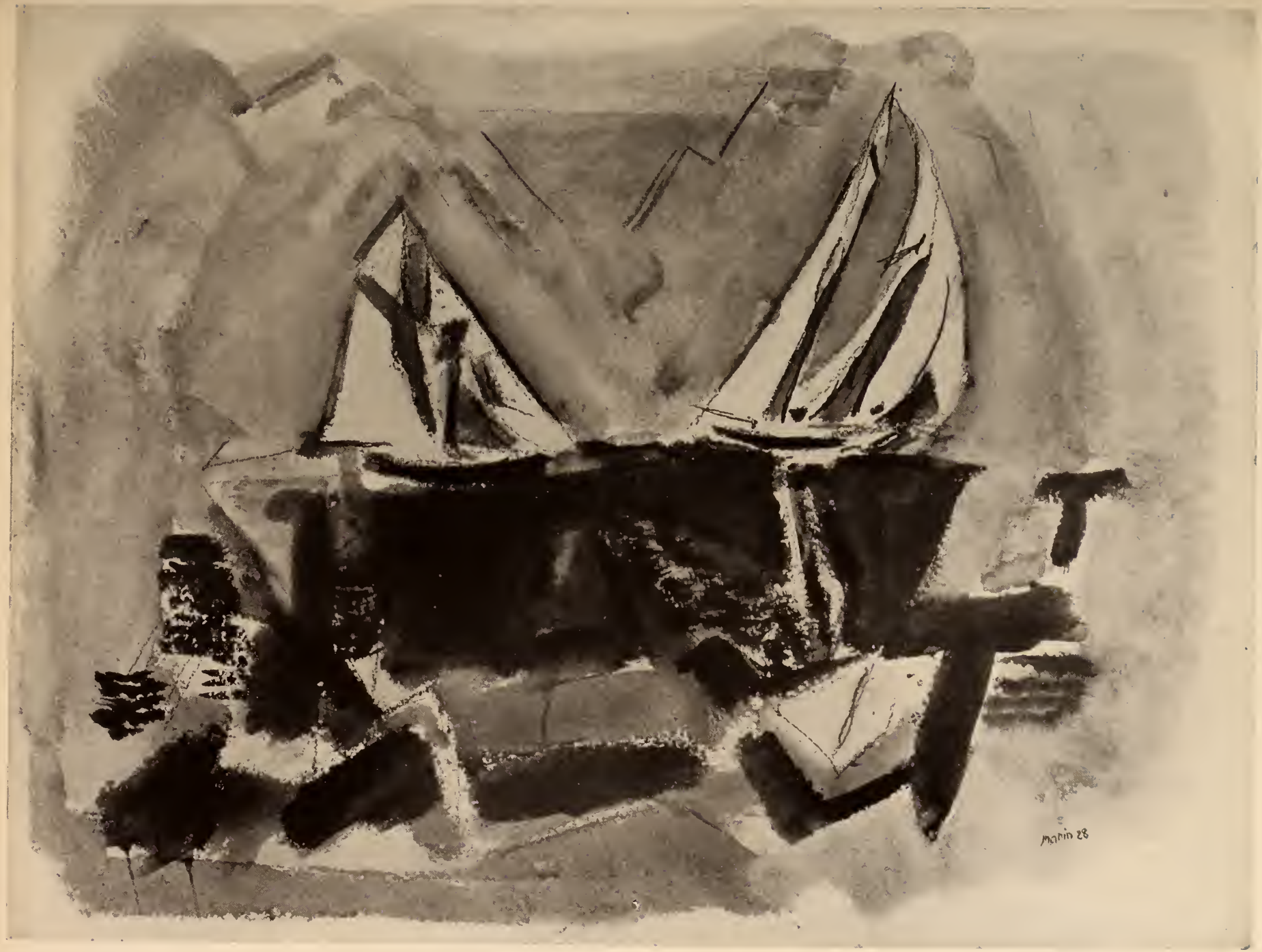
BOY STEALING FRUIT—1923
COLLECTION FERDINAND HOWALD

YASUO KUNIYOSHI

STILL LIFE—1929
COLLECTION DANIEL GALLERY
36

JOHN MARIN

SINGER BUILDING—1921
COLLECTION ALFRED STIEGLITZ



JOHN MARIN

SCHOONER YACHTS—1928
COLLECTION ALFRED STIEGLITZ
38

JOHN MARIN

ON MORSE MOUNTAIN, SMALL POINT, MAINE—1928
COLLECTION PHILIP L. GOODWIN

JOHN MARIN

HOUSE—1920

JOHN MARIN

ISLAND—1921

GEORGIA O'KEEFFE

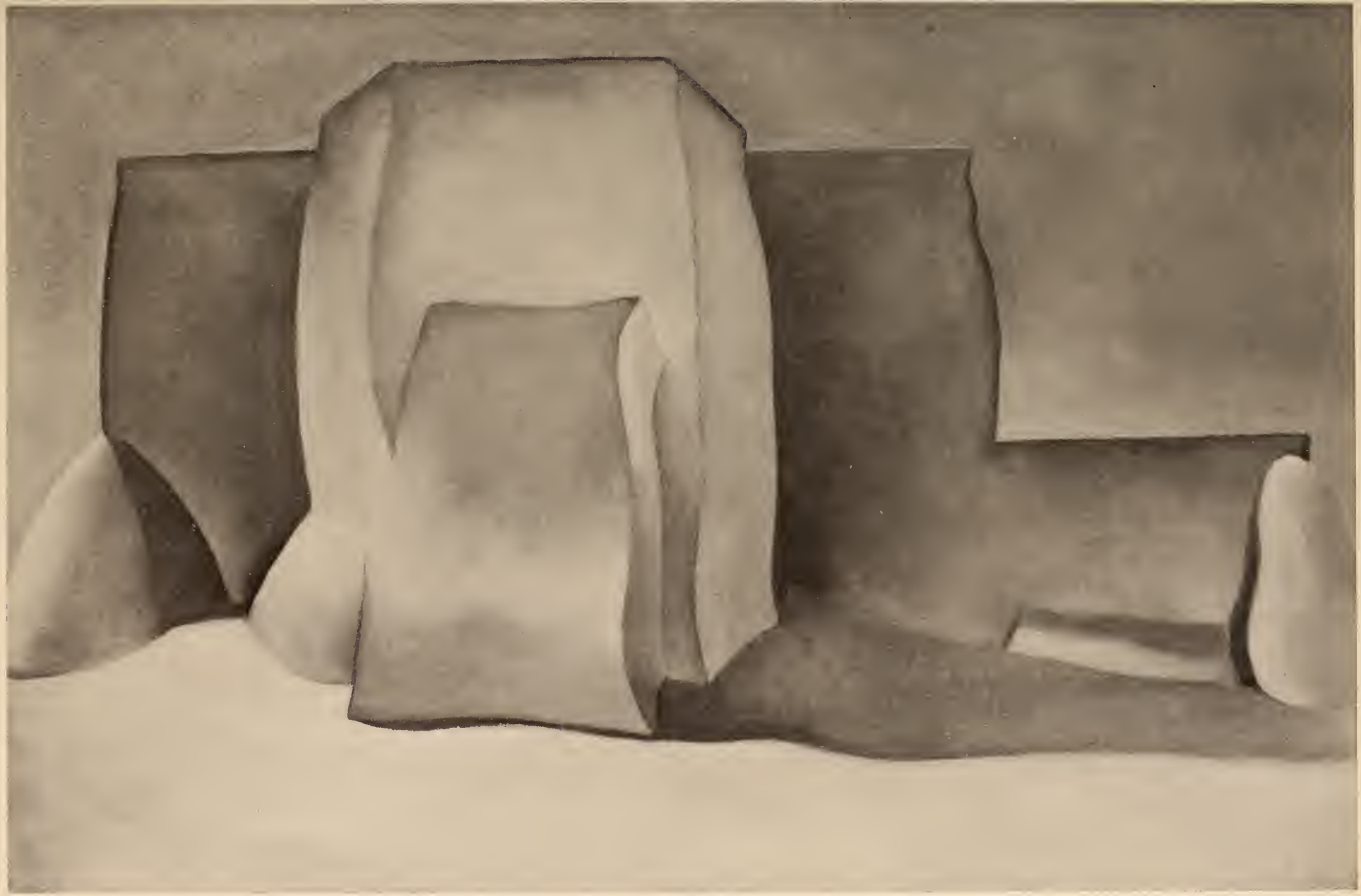
PORTRAIT OF A FARM HOUSE, LAKE GEORGE—1929
COLLECTION AN AMERICAN PLACE

GEORGIA O'KEEFFE

THE MAPLE—1925
COLLECTION ALFRED STIEGLITZ

GEORGIA O'KEEFFE

THE FLAGPOLE—1923
COLLECTION SIR JOSEPH DUVEEN
44



GEORGIA O'KEEFFE

RANCHOS CHURCH, TAOS—1929
COLLECTION AN AMERICAN PLACE

CHARLES SHEELER

PENNSYLVANIA BARN—1922
COLLECTION MRS. J. R. FORCE
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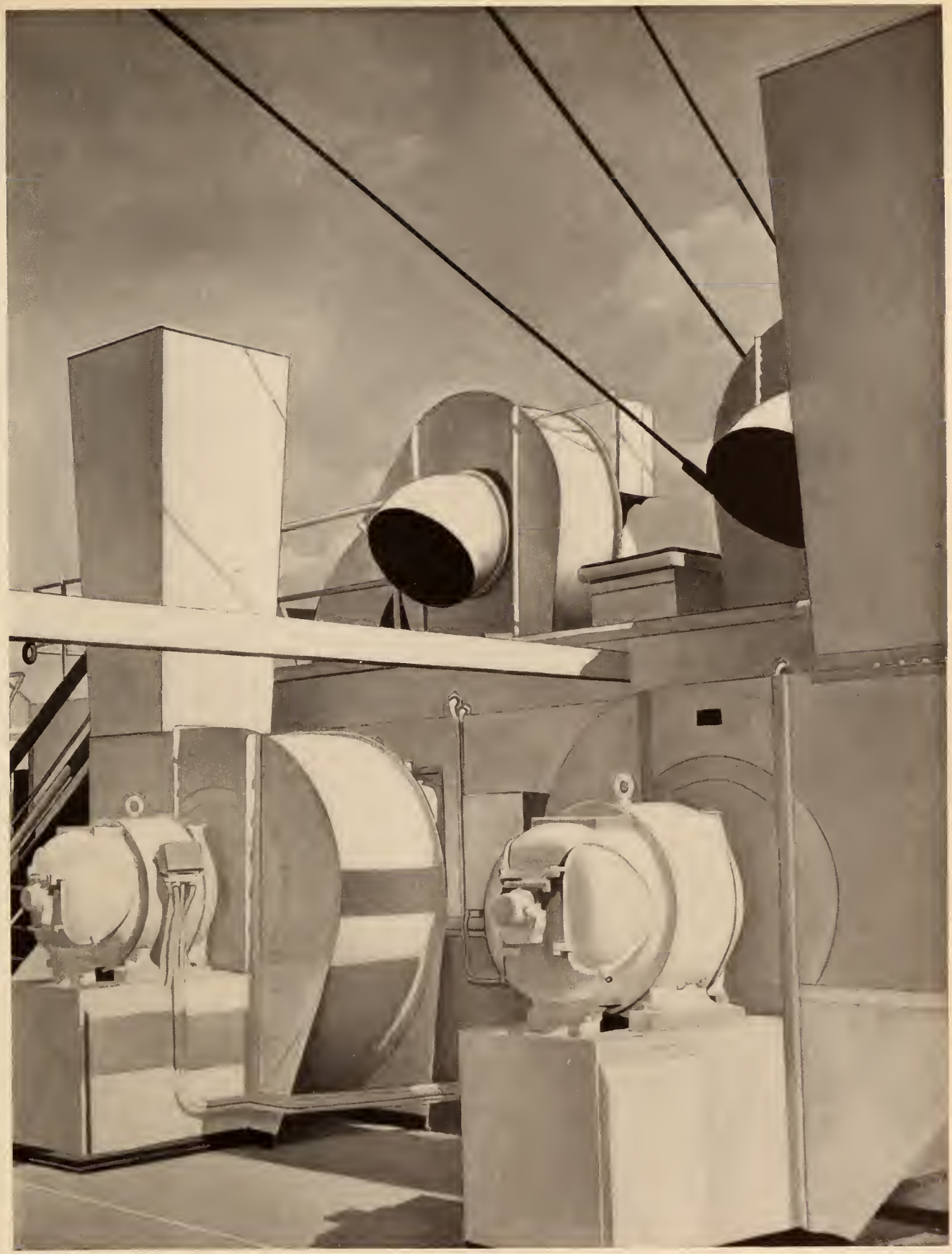
CHARLES SHEELER

INTERIOR—1926
COLLECTION MRS. HARRY PAYNE WHITNEY

CHARLES SHEELER

PERTAINING TO YACHTS AND YACHTING—1923
COLLECTION EARL HORTER



CHARLES SHEELER

UPPER DECK—1929

CHARLES SHEELER

AMERICAN INTERIOR

50

NILES SPENCER

CORPORATION SHED, BERMUDA—1928
COLLECTION FERDINAND HOWALD

MAURICE STERNE

RL IN BLUE CHAIR—1928

OLLECTION SAMUEL A. LEWISOHN

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MAURICE STERNE

ROAD TO ANTICOLI
COLLECTION ADOLPH LEWISOHN
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MAURICE STERNE

INEZ—1929
COLLECTION REINHARDT GALLERY
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MAURICE STERNE

EGGS AND WATER PITCHER—1922
COLLECTION SAMUEL A. LEWISOHN

MAX WEBER

ORIENTAL SCENE—1918
COLLECTION J. B. NEUMANN
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MAX WEBER

WOMAN—1918
COLLECTION J. B. NEUMANN

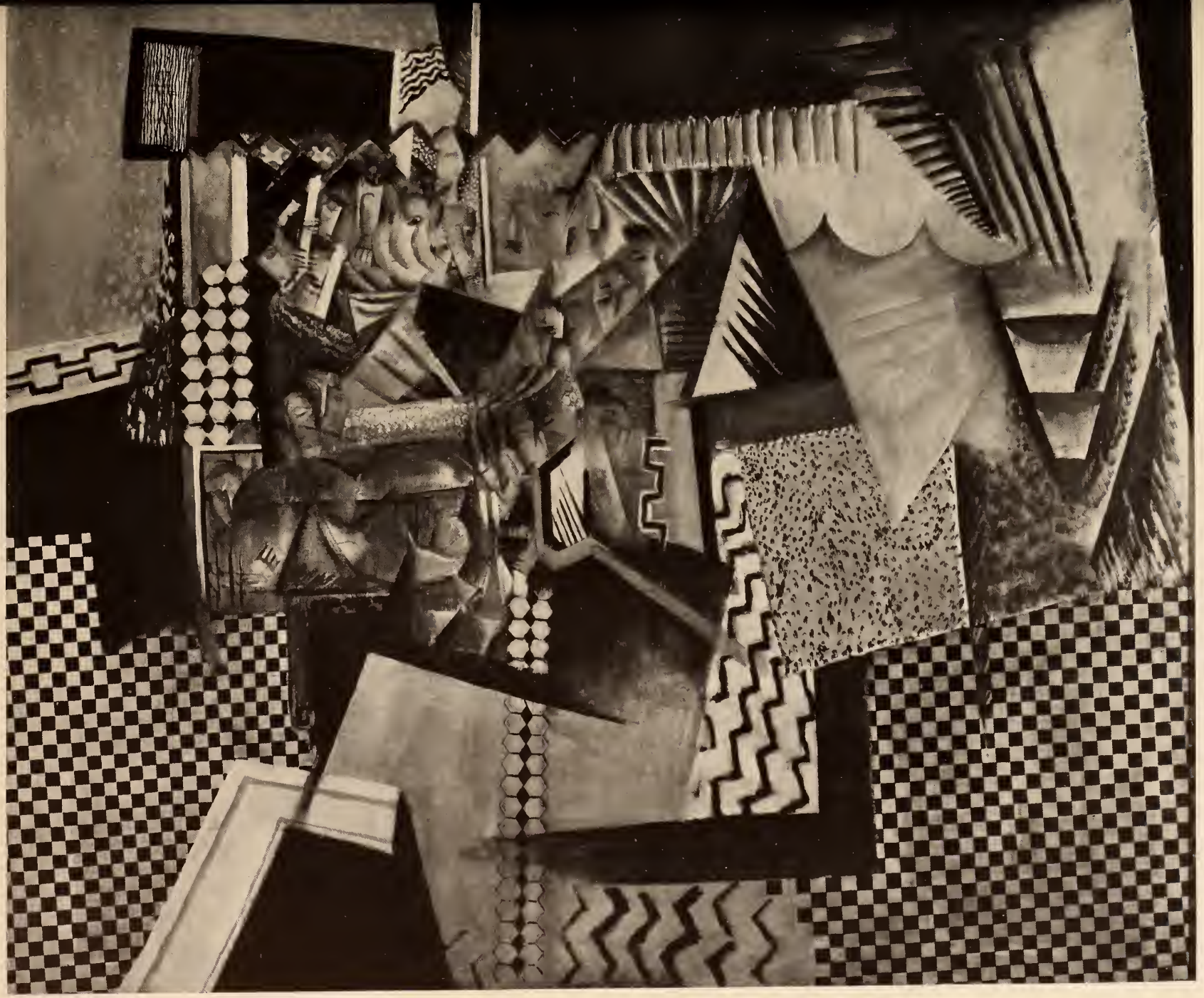
AX WEBER

ONE—1929

LLECTION DOWNTOWN GALLERY

MAX WEBER

TABLE WITH STILL LIFE—1929
COLLECTION SPENCER KELLOGG



MAX WEBER

CHINESE RESTAURANT—1915
COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST

Rebay

ND Kootz, Samuel M.
212 Modern American Painters
K83 1930

Rebay

ND Kootz, Samuel M.
212 Modern American Painters
K83 1930

DATE LOANED	BORROWER'S NAME	DATE RETURNED

MODERN AMERICAN PAINTERS

By SAMUEL M. KOOTZ

While it is probably true that a strictly national art is no longer possible in the world as today constituted, national accents are still discernible and it is to a consideration of the contemporary American idiom that the author of this book has here turned his attention.

It is a fact, if not a particularly strange one, that the present-day painters of Paris are better known in this country than our own artists. A handbook or guide to the ideas and works current amongst us has long been needed and this Mr. Kootz has tried to supply at the same time that he has attempted to clear the ground about him critically.

If he has been unsparing and outspoken in his opinions, he has been no less thorough in his investigations. Here the reader will find not only what the author thinks about our outstanding painters but also what the artists themselves think about their art, what their background is and where their pictures can be seen. The book is illustrated with sixty full-page illustrations.

The artists discussed include Max Weber, Peter Blume, Charles Demuth, Preston Dickinson, Arthur G. Dove, Elsie Driggs, Marsden Hartley, Bernard Karfiol, Morris Kantor, Benjamin Kopman, Walt Kuhn, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, John Marin, Georgia O'Keeffe, Charles Sheeler, Niles Spencer, Vincent Canadé and Maurice Sterne.